

Regent opens academic conference

SALT (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hamzah, the Regent, on Tuesday deputised for His Majesty King Abdullah at the opening of the 32nd session of the Association of Arab Universities (AAU) held at Amman National University. A total of 140 presidents representing 176 Arab universities taking part in the three-day meeting will review two major working papers dealing with scientific research and questions pertaining to student dropouts, in addition to the AAU's activities and plans.



Government announces holiday for Hijra new year

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries, government departments and public offices will be closed on Saturday, April 17, in observance of the new Hijra year, according to a communiqué issued by acting Prime Minister Marwan Hmoud.

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Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Yugoslav forces raid Albanian town, U.S. warns against spread of war

U.S., Russia fail to reach agreement on end to Kosovo conflict

Agencies

YUGOSLAV FORCES staged a cross-border raid on a village in Albania Tuesday, prompting the United States to warn Belgrade against attempts to spread war beyond its borders.

Serb forces attacked Kamenica in northeastern Albania with mortar and heavy artillery before entering the border village and burning houses, Albanian Information Minister Musa Ulqini said.

Albanian television quoted police in the nearby town of Tropoja as saying that the Serb forces had withdrawn in the afternoon and that there were no casualties.

But Yugoslavia denied its forces entered Albania. "This is an absolutely false allegation," Nebojsa Vujovic of the Yugoslav foreign ministry told the Associated Press, saying Serb forces were only defending the country's borders.

Vujovic said Yugoslav forces had no intention of occupying northern Albania, which he described as "a springboard for bringing terrorists and separatists into Kosovo."

"We are taking only self-defence actions, protecting our boundaries," the spokesman said in an interview on CNN.

The United States warned Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic that he would meet with "the most serious consequences" if reports of the incursion proved to be accurate.

"Any widening of the conflict by Milosevic would have the most serious consequences," said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.

In Brussels, NATO officials sought information on the raid



A NATO missile changes direction after colliding with a Yugoslav air defence missile over Belgrade during a NATO air strike early on Tuesday. Several explosions and anti-aircraft fire were heard near Belgrade late on Monday as NATO warplanes and missiles flew above the city, a resident said (Reuters photo)

but a spokeswoman noted: "Any threat to Albanian security would be completely unacceptable."

The attack by Serbian forces was confirmed by Andrea Angelini from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) who said:

"Serbian troops entered the village of Kamenica and several houses are on fire."

There have been skirmishes over the past five days on the Yugoslav-Albanian border as Serb forces have sought to root out fighters from the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army

(KLA) who have set up bases in northern Albania.

Yugoslavia has repeatedly accused Tirana of providing refuge for the KLA while Albania maintains that Belgrade is seeking to extend the conflict to neighbouring countries.

In Brussels, NATO Supreme Commander Wesley Clark apologised for a missile hitting a passenger train in Serbia on Monday in an attack that Yugoslav authorities said killed 10 civilians.

(Continued on page 7)

King, Mubarak, UAE president to hold talks in Abu Dhabi today

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — His Majesty King Abdullah, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan will meet in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday to discuss the possibility of forging a united Arab stand on issues of concern to the Arab Nation, according to a senior Jordanian official.

Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti said the need for a common stand on various pan-Arab issues figured high on the agenda during the King's earlier talks with Sheikh Zayed on Monday. The two leaders discussed regional issues, the situation in Iraq and inter-Arab relations, Kabariti said.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, who is accompanying King Abdullah during his visit to the UAE, emphasised the importance of the trilateral summit, saying that it will pave the way for broader Arab meetings.

Khatib said the three leaders

will discuss issues of concern to the Arab Nation, including developments following Libya's handover of two of its nationals charged with the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, means of restoring Arab solidarity, the current status of the Middle East peace process, and other regional and international issues.

Khatib praised Sheikh Zayed's pan-Arab stands, saying that the Emirates leader has always called for unifying Arab policies.

The minister described King Abdullah's visit to the UAE as successful, adding that the King expressed gratitude and appreciation to the UAE for its supportive positions.

King Abdullah's visit to the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman is part of a regional tour that will take him to other Arab countries, including Syria, aimed at enhancing Jordan's ties with Arab countries.

In reference to Israel's attempts to provide Jordan

with less than its share of water stipulated in the 1994 peace treaty, Khatib reaffirmed Jordan's total commitment to the provisions of the agreement in letter and spirit, saying that the Kingdom will not renegotiate nor will it relinquish its rights.

King Abdullah also met with UAE Crown Prince and Deputy Commander General of the UAE armed forces Sheikh Khalifah Bin Zayed for talks on bilateral relations. King Abdullah stressed the need for ongoing consultation and contact between the two countries to enhance Jordan-UAE ties.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh, Royal Court Chief Kabariti and the Jordanian ambassador to the UAE.

Also Tuesday, King Abdullah and Queen Rania met with members of the Jordanian community in the UAE, who reiterated their support for the leadership of King Abdullah.

Israeli settlers seize new hilltop with government's blessing

'Settlement building more than doubled in 1998'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — With government approval, Israeli settlers seized a new hilltop Tuesday as part of a drive to keep as much of the West Bank as possible in Israeli hands.

The expansion came amid sharp U.S. criticism that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's settlement policy hampers efforts to make peace with the Palestinians, who hope to establish a state in the West Bank.

Netanyahu has ignored the criticism, telling a group of settlers at a ceremony dedicating a new West Bank industrial park Monday that "we have done a lot, and we will do more."

Israeli peace groups accuse Netanyahu of building on the outer boundaries of existing settlements in an effort to keep the maximum amount of land in Israeli hands.

Peace Now said settlers have created 17 new enclaves since Netanyahu signed the U.S.-brokered Wye River land-for-peace agreement with the Palestinians in October.

Peace Now released a report on Tuesday saying that Israel's rightist government more than doubled the pace of settlement units construction in Jewish

settlements last year. Peace Now said it had catalogued 3,900 housing starts in Jewish enclaves of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, up from 1,900 in 1997 and 1,680 in 1996.

Netanyahu's government insists the new housing is needed for the "natural growth" of the settlements which are now home to around 160,000 Jews.

But Peace Now said that while housing construction boomed in the territories, the number of housing starts registered inside Israel last year fell 20 per cent from 1997 to 39,020 units.

On Tuesday, settlers from the Tene Oranin settlement 20 kilometres south of the Palestinian town of Hebron erected mobile homes on a hilltop 400 metres from the main settlement, said Peter Lerner, a spokesman for the Israeli military government in the West Bank.

Lerner said the settlers first put seven mobile homes on the hill several weeks ago but were ordered off because they didn't have a permit. The settlers removed five of the mobile homes on Monday, but put them back Tuesday, he said.

The government has no plans to remove them. "I don't expect us to be removing them, even though it is illegal in the meantime," Lerner said, adding that he expected the government to approve the expansion within the next few days.

The Israeli daily Haaretz said on Tuesday that last week, Netanyahu approved a request by settlers to establish agricultural and other enclaves in the gaps between existing settlements in order to create contiguous strips of land in Israeli hands.

Yair Maayan, a Netanyahu settlement adviser who attended the meeting, refused to say what was decided.

Netanyahu aide David Bar-Ilan said he was checking the report.

He said Israel had the right to build within the outer boundaries of existing settlements, even several hundred metres away from the last building.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Tuesday condemned settlement expansion. "This is against all the agreements which have been signed," he said, returning from the latest leg of a world tour aimed at garnering support for a Palestinian state.

'Sharon offers Lebanon withdrawal before May elections' General admits Israel mulling partial pullback in Lebanon

Agencies

ISRAEL HAS offered a peace deal to Lebanon and Syria involving an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon within a month and the start of negotiations with Damascus over the Golan Heights immediately after Israeli elections in May, a newspaper reported Tuesday.

According to the Haaretz newspaper, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon proposed the deal during talks in Moscow Monday with Russian leaders, whom he asked to transmit the offer to Syria.

Under the plan, Israel would withdraw from the buffer zone it occupies in south Lebanon before the May 17 general elec-

tions in exchange for a tacit Syrian agreement to prevent cross-border attacks by Islamist and Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon, Haaretz said.

Opinion polls show that Israelis are anxious to bring the troops home from Lebanon, where another Israeli soldier was killed on Monday, and that a withdrawal would greatly help the reelection hopes of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Once returned to power, Netanyahu would immediately resume peace negotiations with Syria focussing on a withdrawal from some of the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied from Syria in 1967 and annexed in 1981, Haaretz said.

The offer made no mention of how much of the Golan Israel would be willing to return. Netanyahu has so far publicly refused to offer any territorial concessions over the territory.

Sharon, who was still in Moscow on Tuesday, was quoted by Israeli radio as denying the report, written by Haaretz's respected military editor Zeev Schiff.

"This is completely false, the issue of Lebanon was not even raised during my visit to Moscow," the radio quoted Sharon as saying.

Meanwhile, the head of Israel's military has admitted that the army is considering the evacuation of some bases it holds in occupied south

Lebanon, it was reported Tuesday.

In a briefing Monday with Israeli military reporters, General Shaul Mofaz said the pullback would involve transferring control of certain exposed bases in the buffer zone to the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army.

"There are bases whose transfer to the SLA can be considered," Mofaz was quoted as saying.

"We came to the conclusion some time ago that it would be right to reduce the number of [Israeli] soldiers on the bases in order to diminish the threats posed to our troops," he said.

"Our allies are strong today and it would be right to transfer these bases to their authority,

assuming it can maintain them," he said.

But Mofaz rejected calls for a full withdrawal from the zone.

"In the event of a unilateral withdrawal, we can assume that Hizbollah would just continue its activity against the army and communities in northern Israel," he said.

Public pressure has been building in Israel for a withdrawal from Lebanon, where Israel has maintained troops since 1978 in the declared aim of preventing attacks on northern Israeli towns by Palestinian and Islamist guerrillas, notably the Iranian-backed Hizbollah militia. More than 1,200 Israelis have died in Lebanon.

Jordan's WTO accession bid held up by needed reforms, business opposition

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Local industries may have to brace themselves for a new set of rules in a new playing field if Jordan manages to join the World Trade Organisation before the current round of negotiations ends in the year 2000.

Jordan still has significant legal and policy reforms to implement before making the grade for membership in the 134-nation club, which aims to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to international trade in goods, facilitate trade in services and protect intellectual property rights.

While some officials argue that joining the WTO, whose members account for more than 90 per cent of world trade in goods and services, is essential for Jordan to attract foreign investment, secure advantages for its exports and integrate itself into the world economy,

others argue that for local industries it is "suicide." Opponents to membership say national industries will be faced with fierce competition at home and forced to meet what

NEWS ANALYSIS

some say are unattainable standards as the rules of engagement change.

Jordan, which applied to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the WTO's predecessor, in January 1994, has slashed tariffs, made it easier for foreigners to invest in Jordan, and begun an overall loosening of some of its choking domestic controls. Foreigners, however, are still required to have a Jordanian partner, with a 50 per cent share, for trade-related businesses, including retail and import-export. The construction sector and legal field are closed sec-

tors. But Jordan still has a long way to go. It needs to reform its foreign trade regime by amending many existing laws, enacting new ones, and phasing out protectionist trade policies, including removing distortions such as customs exemptions to large businesses and fixed prices for consumer goods.

"There is a massive amount of work to be completed," said Mohammad Halaqah, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and chief negotiator to accession to the WTO. "There is a great cost to joining the WTO, but if we do not join, the cost will be higher... our industries will no longer be competitive, they will lose markets and foreign investment in Jordan will be jeopardised."

Then there is the matter of timing. "If Jordan does not conclude its negotiations by early 2000, then it

will be taking a big risk of not joining the WTO in the near future given the next round of multilateral trade negotiations," said Farhat Farhat, a WTO advisor offering technical support to Jordan through the USAID-funded AMIR (Access to Microfinance and Improved Implementation of Policy Reform) programme in its bid to gain accession to the WTO.

"Requirements for joining the WTO after the next round will become much more onerous," he said. The next round of trade negotiations, the Millennium Round, is expected to begin sometime in the year 2000.

Jordan is already under increasing pressure from trading partners to enforce intellectual property rights.

The United States Trade Representative Office has put Jordan on a Special 301 watch list for having inadequate intellectual property

protection. This is one level below the priority watch list reserved for those countries with the most egregious violations.

The European Union, which has negotiated a partnership agreement with Jordan granting reduced tariffs to European products over 10 years, is also urging Jordan to enact WTO consistent legislation.

(Under the terms of the agreement, Jordanian goods get duty free access to European markets). Over \$1.2 billion of the country's imports come from Europe.

"Not joining in the very near future could cause significant negative side effects on future economic growth and stability in Jordan," Farhat warned.

Whether the WTO is of benefit or not really depends on where you sit.

"In the short run the negative impact of new legislation will be limited to the pharmaceutical and

software industry," said Halaqah. "They may suffer initially but they have to adjust to new realities."

Many of Jordan's pharmaceutical companies manufacture medicines without licences, and an estimated 85 per cent of all software packages sold here are pirated.

Around 83 per cent of Jordan's foreign trade is — or soon will be — with WTO members.

"Fulfilling WTO membership requirements entails many sacrifices, but we are already paying the price," said economist and columnist Fahed Fanek, referring to the International Monetary Fund reform package, which entails tariff and customs reforms, and the European Partnership Agreement. "The price is already being paid so why not get the rewards and join the WTO?"

The rewards are indeed many. As a WTO member Jordan will enjoy Most Favoured Nation

(MFN) status and national treatment for its exports in the markets of the 134 WTO countries, according to Farhat. Joining the club also means a stamp of approval by the international community that Jordan has an attractive and stable trade and investment environment.

"We are a small country. We cannot hope to influence world trade policy so we have to work to best adapt to economic realities rather than expect to change things," Fanek said.

"The question is not whether we want globalisation, it is how do we best deal with it," he said.

Although the number cannot be determined, it is certain that some local businesses, after enjoying privileged treatment for so long, will find they are poorly equipped to deal with fierce foreign competition even in the domestic market.

(Continued on page 7)

AOHR blasts government for violating citizen's rights

By Dima Hamdan

AMMAN — The Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) accused the government of violating human rights by taking arbitrary measures against citizens, and of paying little attention to complaints raised against its alleged practices.

The AOHR issued its annual report at a press conference on Monday. The report stated that the organisation received 76 written complaints in 1998, of which 31 were related to detention without judicial memorandums, five were related to torture by the police and members of security departments, two were related to harassment by security forces without a legal cause, and the remainder included denial of the right to

lecture, detention in the airport, seizure of passports and transfer of political prisoners to distant prisons.

The report also mentioned that the government responded only to 10 per cent of these complaints. Responses were sometimes positive, such as the release of detainees, allegations in some complaints were denied and, in other cases, authorities denied knowledge of the case.

The organisation said the these complaints are not representative of the total number of violations that occurred last year.

"People do not make complaints because they are afraid that the authorities would come after them," said Hani Dahleh, lawyer and member of the AOHR.

"We do not deny that such things could happen," said Najeeb Rashdan, lawyer and director of the AOHR. "But we operate within the law. Therefore we only accept written complaints."

The organisation ranked the current Press and Publications Law as the top violation of constitutional rights, saying that it is an "obvious setback to press freedom, as most articles are the same as the temporary amendments of 1997, suspended by the Supreme Court due to violation of provisions in the Constitution." The report also drew attention to the riots that broke out in Ma'an in February 1998, which resulted in several injuries and the death of one Jordanian, Mohammed Al Katib.

According to a report issued

by an investigating committee from the AOHR, the riots erupted because the security forces interfered in a peaceful demonstration in support of Iraq. This resulted in tight security measures, school closures, as well as water and power cuts. Several arrests were made and a curfew was imposed.

"Women and children were forbidden from going to hospitals," said one attendant in the conference. "Merchants lost thousands of dinars because their shops were closed and several food items were spoiled."

"The condition of human rights in Jordan remains as if we were under martial law," concluded Dahleh. "Although [martial law] has been annulled, it is still being imposed in reality."



TURKEY PROTESTS: Turkish riot police detain a demonstrator during a pro-Kurdish party rally in the southeast Turkish city of Diyarbakir Tuesday. Emergency rule authorities in Turkey's turbulent southeast banned a pro-Kurdish party rally and made hundreds of arrests on Tuesday in a clamp-down five days before national and local polls (Reuters photo)

Arafat says he has international support

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat said on Tuesday that he was satisfied with the results of his latest frenetic tour of 13 world capitals, and that he had international support for the Palestinian cause.

"They [the world leaders] are supporting and will support us in any decision we will take," Arafat told journalists when he returned to his office in Gaza City.

Arafat has been trying to

drum up support for the Palestinian declaration of a state on May 4 when the five-year interim period of the Oslo peace process with Israel is due to end.

But the great majority of the leaders whom the Palestinian leader met joined the United States and the European Union in urging Arafat not to declare a state unilaterally in May.

"They are encouraging us to continue implementing what we agreed upon especially in the agreements

which were signed at the White House," he said.

Arafat left Gaza on April 5 on an eight-day trip which has taken him to Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Japan, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Yemen, Sudan, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

On Wednesday the Palestinian president is due to travel to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and then on to China.

Workshop discusses options regarding Palestinian state

By Saad G. Hattar

AMMAN — A Jordanian and a Palestinian think tank last week held a closed-door workshop in which they sought to probe each side's options and priorities with regard to the declaration of a Palestinian state, in the absence of Palestinian-Israeli final status negotiations.

One of the key proposals floated in the meeting was the need for Jordanian involvement in final status negotiations between the Palestinians and Israel. The meeting, sponsored by the University of Jordan's Centre for Strategic Studies, discussed possible scenarios that could be tapped by policymakers after the expiry on May 4 of the five-year interim peace accords with Israel.

CSS Director Mustafa Hamaneh said that the "experts and academic had an extremely objective and fruitful discussion in a very frank way." The workshop, held on April 5, was designed to contribute towards a "healthier atmosphere" in relations between the two parties, Hamaneh told the Jordan Times. Hamaneh is a co-author of a book on scenarios of future cooperation between Jordan and the Palestinians, published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, in association with the CSS and the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies in Nablu.

4,500-6,000 children dying each month in Iraq: Australian doctor

CANBERRA (AFP) — Between 4,500 and 6,000 children are dying each month in Iraq from lack of food and medical care as a result of U.N. sanctions, an Australian doctor who has just returned from the country said on Tuesday.

Sue Wareham, Australian president of the Medical Association for Prevention of War, spent eight days in Iraq and warned the human cost of NATO bombing in Yugoslavia would be just as high.

"The sanctions represent a form of silent and ongoing warfare and are contrary to all medical and humanitarian principles," she said.

"They represent a crime against humanity."

Wareham was part of a delegation which delivered medical supplies and shared its expertise with Iraqi doctors on the ground.

"These doctors work under extremely difficult circumstances and they see patients dying from illnesses they shouldn't be dying from," she said. The delegation found that between 4,500 and 6,000 children die each month for lack of food and medical care. Most deaths are from treatable or preventable illnesses such as gastrointestinal and respiratory infections resulting from malnutrition, Wareham said. "Although food and medicine are technically exempt under the sanctions imposed in 1990, if

you can't afford to buy them, that doesn't mean much," she said.

"The sanctions against Iraq should be lifted. They're not having any positive effect on the politics in Iraq but they're causing enormous suffering to innocent people," Wareham said the situation in Iraq held important lessons for the current NATO bombing of Serbia. "Again, they should be putting these enormous resources into providing a peaceful resolution to the conflict instead of into bombs. It's the wrong approach to conflict," she said.

Jordan seeks U.S. support for QIZ expansion

AMMAN (U.T.) — Jordan will hold talks with the U.S. government later this month on expanding the Qualifying Industrial Zone (QIZ) in Jordan.

Products manufactured in the zone can be marketed customs and quota free in the U.S. market.

Minister of Industry and Trade Mohammad Asfour, who will lead talks in the U.S. on April 23, said he will meet his American counterpart William Daly and a number of other officials to explore ways to encourage American investment in Jordanian projects.

In the coming talks, Jordan will seek to secure U.S. approval of Jordan's expansion of the QIZ to include Karak and Mafrak, in addition to the present QIZ near Irbid.

Asfour said during his week-long visit he will also discuss Jordan's bid to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and will negotiate with U.S. officials the purchase of 100,000 tonnes of wheat.

He also will deliver an address at the U.S.-Arab chamber of commerce about investment prospects in the Kingdom.

Earlier this month Asfour announced that industries to be established in the two governorates should meet the conditions and specifications agreed on with the U.S. before industrial exports can be marketed duty and quota free in the U.S.

The Mafrak and Karak zones will not be restricted to producing goods for export to the U.S., but will also manufacture products for export to other countries.

According to the minister, the plans aim to create an attractive investment climate in Jordan for foreign investors, noting that a special committee will have to review any commodity produced at the zones to ensure conformity to the conditions set under the QIZ agreement concluded by the U.S., Israel and Jordan in 1997.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

- German film "Spur der Steine" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe - Institut, Jabal Amman at 7:30 p.m.
- "Renaissance: In the Full Bloom" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday April 15 at 6:30 p.m. (To be preceded by a lecture by Dr. Mazin Asfour at 5:30 p.m.)
- Children's film "The Magic of the Faraway Tree" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.
- "The Lost World" at the American Centre, Abdoun on Thursday April 15 at 5:00 p.m.

AMMAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

- "Making Cartoon With Children" by Eding Ericksson at the Hayy Nazzal Development Centre, until April 14 (2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.)
- Palestinian play "The Glass Café" at Osama Machini Theatre at 6:00 p.m. Egyptian play "Layali Al Warshah," Dutch play "Male/Female," and Iraqi play "The Cowardly Men" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m., and 9:00 p.m. respectively.

LECTURE

- "Wadi Rajeb" (in Arabic) by Mohammad Abu Abileh at the Friends of Archaeology Centre at 6:30 p.m. (Telefax: 5930682).
- Musical performance by Franck Braley at Terra Sancta College, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday April 15 at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- Plastic art exhibition by Hussein Da'ssa entitled "Horizons of the Nineties" at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani, until April 20 (Tel. 56813034).

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 18:00 Children's Programme - Harmerman
- 18:30 "The Prince and the Pauper"
- 19:00 "Le Journal"
- 19:15 French Programme
- 19:30 News headlines
- 19:33 French Programme
- 20:30 N.Y.P.D. Blue
- 21:15 Divine Pledge
- 22:00 News in English
- 22:30 Drama - Cover Story
- 23:59 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

- 03:43 Fajr
- 05:04 (Sunrise) Duha
- 11:36 Dhuhur
- 15:12 'Asr
- 18:08 Maghreb
- 19:28 'Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 5920740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 4634590
- Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366
- Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811
- St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751
- Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
- German-speaking Evangelical

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifieh Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising gradually and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm to moderate, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman08/20

Aqaba14/29

Deserts07/23

Jordan Valley12/27

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 26, Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun05/16

Jerash09/22

Um Qays08/21

Madaba08/21

Petra08/23

Dead Sea14/29

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Youssef Rashid4875792

Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab4758848

Dr. Khalil Jbali4784450

Dr. Walid Al Masri5675485

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

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Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5336169

IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al Salhi(02)246857

Fou'ad Pharmacy(02)275360

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Halaseh(05)982799

Palestine Pharmacy(05)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192 4621111 4657777

Fire Brigade4617101

Blood Bank4775121

Highway Police5343402

Traffic Police4896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints5605800

Price Complaints5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)121

Overseas Calls0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101

Jordan Television4773111

Radio Jordan4774111

Water Authority5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5815615

Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199

The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre5668566

Luzmila4630195

Khalidi Maternity4642412

Akileh Maternity4642412

Jabal Amman Maternity4642362

Malhas, J. Amman4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani5607071

Shmeisani Hospital5607431

Jordan Hospital5607550

University Hospital5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279

Al-Ahli, Abdli56641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir4775111/25

Army, Marka4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital5157100

Arnal Hospital5607155

Home News

Landmine Survivors Network opens branch in Jordan to aid victims

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday met with Minister of Social Development Faisal Ruffo and the founder of the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) Jerry White at Bab Al Salam.

Queen Noor, the patron of LSN, expressed her satisfaction that the LSN registered a branch in Jordan at the Ministry of Social Development.

The Queen noted that the LSN Jordanian branch will play an important role in fulfilling Jordan's ratification of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty: a key component of the treaty is humanitarian support to landmine survivors.

The Queen added that the Middle East and North Africa, one of the most heavily mined in the world, will benefit from LSN's branch, that will develop model pilot programmes for Jordan and the region.

According to Jerry White, the LSN branch constitutes the "first amputee support network in the Middle East."

LSN is completing an overview of the prosthetic and rehabilitation centres in the country. The list will be published soon as the first

national rehabilitation services directory. There are an estimated 700-900 landmine survivors in the Kingdom.

Later, Queen Noor met Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib to discuss the first meeting of state parties to the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty in Maputo, Mozambique, May 3-7.

Jordan has been offered the opportunity to co-chair the conference, and HRH Prince Zeid Ben Ra'd will head Jordan's delegation. He will read a message from the Queen.

The 1997 Mine Ban Treaty comprehensively bans all anti-personnel mines, requires destruction of stockpiled mines within four years, requires destruction of mines already laid within ten years, and urges extensive programmes to assist victims.

The treaty entered into force on March 1, 1999. To date, 135 countries worldwide have signed the convention and 71 countries have ratified it. In the MENA region, only Jordan, Qatar and Yemen have signed and ratified the ban treaty, while Tunisia and Algeria have signed, but not yet ratified.

Child abuse workshop opens Thursday

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Rania Al Abdullah, a one-day workshop on "Child Abuse: Detection and Management," will be held on Thursday, its organisers said on Monday.

The workshop aims to address relevant factors in detection, reporting and management of the physical and sexual abuse of children, according to Mo'amen Hadidi, head of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine (NIFM).

He said the workshop aims to tackle problems facing inter-agency cooperation, highlight the importance of policies and procedures in detection and management of child abuse, and address relevant factors in the criminal justice system.

According to Hadidi, the workshop is the result of a three-year link between the institution and a British university in Liverpool. The two parties agreed in April 1998 to exchange studies, experience and research in the field of domestic violence.

The cooperation between the two offers financial support for the institute to strengthen its staff and research capacity and course and curriculum development.

In a recent interview with the Jordan Times, Hadidi said that the partnership will help better educate health workers in early detection of children

at risk, and will show how to deal with abused children.

According to a 1998 study of minors in the Kingdom, conducted by the police for the years 1993 to 1996, documented 2,500 reported crimes against minors, including murder, attempted murder, abduction, felonious assault, molestation, rape and manslaughter.

Experts and sociologists have blamed rapid socio-economic and political changes and increasing poverty and unemployment for an increase of violence against women and children.

The Kingdom recently witnessed a number of cases of crimes against children that has included new types of abuse against children such as burning and poisoning as well as molestation and sexual abuse.

Over 50 professionals from the Jordan River Foundation, the ministries of health and social development, schools of medicine and nursing at Jordanian universities, the Royal Medical Services, the Family Protection Unit, the Public Security Department and the NIFM.

Sessions on the agenda include "Definitions of child abuse," "Discipline or physical child abuse," "Recognising signs and behaviours," and "How to respond to abuse."

The event will be held by the British Council and the NIFM in cooperation with JRF.

JPA launches sit-in to pressure Al Arab Al Yawm

'The sit-in will last until the 17 dismissals are retracted' — Sheriff

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — In its bid to help 17 employees sacked by Al Arab Al Yawm's board of directors, the Jordan Press Association (JPA) on Tuesday started an "open-ended sit-in."

"Our sit-in is the first of several measures the JPA intends to take against the daily's board to pressure it to reappoint its fired employees," said JPA's president Seif Sheriff.

He said the sit-in will last until the daily's chairman of the board Riyadh Hroub retracts the dismissals.

However, Al Arab Al Yawm's board has not shown any sign of leniency and said it is not willing to negotiate the matter further.

"The board's decision is clear and final, and we will not go back on it or reappoint those dismissed," said Adnan Hussein, the paper's general manager. He accused the JPA of escalating the situation to a point of no return after it had promised to find an amicable solution for all sides.

Last Thursday the JPA council blasted the paper for firing the employees, and said the daily's arguments as presented by Hussein — that the dismissals were necessary for "internal restructuring," and fell within an article of the Labour Law — were unconvincing.

It then called for a one-day strike by all members of JPA who are Al Arab Al Yawm's employees and warned scrutiny for those who failed to attend.

The move ignited a flare



The JPA stages an open-ended sit-in in a bid to help the 17 sacked employees of Al Arab Al Yawm in a tent on the opposite side of the Arab Al Yawm building.

between both sides signalling the start of a war of words.

However, the call for the one-day strike by JPA was retracted after it found out that an immediate strike was illegal under the labour law, and that it required a 14-day announcement. Instead, arrangements for the sit-in on Tuesday morning were made by the JPA after it obtained permission from Amman's mayor.

Al Arab Al Yawm accused the JPA of electioneering ahead of its April 23 elections and of trying to drive the paper off the market. Sheriff, who is running for a third term as JPA president, has denied the newspaper's accusations.

He said the JPA's actions were "purely professional and for the rights of those fired."

Moussa Hawamdeh, one of the fired 17, a former managing editor and another candidate for the JPA presidency,

during the sit-in again accused the JPA's current president and others of using the issue at hand as a campaign propaganda.

"After April 23, elections will be over and neither the current president, if he is re-elected or any new one, will have the same zest for our case. It will merely blow over, and we will end up on the streets," he said.

He called on the JPA to maintain its position and stand by them until they regain their posts at the daily. He said the dismissals were arbitrary.

During the sit-in, Yahia Shukkleir, head of the local news department in Al Arab Al Yawm, said he along with most of the employees support the JPA's measures.

"Nobody should be sacked under the current circumstances of unemployment and poverty," he said.

Al Arab Al Yawm has assured employees that there will be no further dismissals, saying the only employees fired were those who had proven to be incompetent and unproductive.

This is not the first tussle over employment at the paper. Last December, Hroub sacked around 16 of the daily's non-editorial staff and in February he fired the chief editor and the responsible editor.

"They promised us before they would not fire anyone else, and the rum reached us now," said Hawamdeh.

The sit-in under the banner of "No to arbitrary dismissal," and "Arbitrary dismissal is a violation of human rights and freedom of expression."

The sit-in started at 10 o'clock in the morning on Tuesday, witnessing a 200-person participation which later dwindled to several tens

Head-hunting company holds first meeting

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Jordan's first head-hunting company held its first-board meeting on Tuesday and set out its operational guidelines, said Samer Majali, who was elected as chairman.

The Jordanian Professional Marketing Company which hopes to recruit thousands of Jordanians to work in Arab Gulf states is expected to start receiving applications from Jordanian professionals within the coming two months.

"The decision to set up the company and issue a tender for the construction of a manpower data base was the major aim of the meeting," Majali told the Jordan Times.

The government owns 30 per cent of the company while the private sector owns the rest.

The company's headquarters will be in Amman and will have representatives in Gulf states, said Majali.

Public and private sector employees hailed the idea of establishing the JD500,000 budget company, and views it as a window to a better future.

Walid Abu Jureis, a 39-year-old schoolteacher, believes that even if he continues working in the Kingdom for another 20 years, he will not be able to upgrade his living condition.

"All my colleagues in the school feel the same. They do not want to remain in their posts," complained Abu Jureis.

According to a senior official, Jordan has received many

promises from Arab countries to recruit tens of thousands of qualified Jordanians to work in the Gulf.

Amid fears that the immigration of Jordanians to the Gulf will cause a national "brain drain," daily newspapers are awash with advertisements asking for qualified expert to work in the Gulf countries.

While some politicians agree that sending labour abroad could be a golden opportunity for generally underpaid government and private sector employees, they say foreign companies will be seeking highly experienced staff, leaving behind the less qualified workers.

Majali contests this argument.

"Jordan has a highly qualified workforce for which it does not have jobs. This is [the] true brain drain," he said.

However, economists say sending Jordanians abroad is a feasible way to help tackle soaring unemployment. Today more than 300,000 Jordanians work abroad, mainly in the Gulf. They send home JD1.5 billion annually in remittances.

"We have enough excess labourers to send them to the Gulf. This will pave the way for others to work instead of them," said Rami Khouri a columnist and a publisher.

Official figures place unemployment rate at 14 per cent while independent survey say the figure is closer to 27 per cent.

Two women killed in reported 'honour crimes'

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Two women were reportedly killed in the Kingdom in the past two days in separate incidents in what their assailants alleged was a "crime of honour."

In the first incident, Shafiq M., 33, a mother of a one-year-old daughter, was stabbed to death by her younger brother in Aqaba, an official source told the Jordan Times.

According to the source, the victim's husband claimed that recent medical examinations indicated that he is infertile, and he informed her family.

The victim's younger brother questioned her about her alleged "illegal pregnancy," and after an argument, stabbed his sister to death, the source said.

The source added that medical examinations indicated that the woman received over 20 severe stab wounds.

The woman's throat was slit, and she had suffered skull fractures and bruises to other parts of her body, according to the source.

The second case involved a woman in her mid-20s, who was allegedly stabbed at least 50 times by her brothers and husband in Salt for her alleged "involvement in immoral behaviours," one source said.

Mervat K. received mul-

multiple stab wounds to her neck and chest in her house in the Bugeih area, the source said, adding that police are currently questioning all three men.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that the woman was killed in a crime of honour. He would not elaborate.

The murders bring the number of women killed in Jordan for reasons of "honour" to six, according to official sources.

In other incidents in the Kingdom, a 69-year-old businessman committed suicide on Monday evening in his home in Jabal Hussein, the source said.

The man, F. L., reportedly shot himself in the head with his gun, the source said.

According to the source, preliminary investigations indicated that the man, who is also a real estate broker, went bankrupt, and that "it was a possibility that he killed himself for this reason."

The victim's body was taken to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine for an autopsy.

Also on Sunday, a 19-year-old man was found hanged with a belt in the bathroom of his house in Sahab in a possible suicide case, another source said. Police said they were investigating the incident.

Jordan, U.S. sign water agreements

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Jordan and the U.S. on Tuesday signed \$2.7 million in agreements to provide consultation for two water and wastewater projects as the government gears up to enforce its recent water contingency plans to handle a possible shortage this summer.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Kamel Mahadin and representatives of two U.S. consulting firms signed contracts to prepare designs and a feasibility study for two projects in Amman and Aqaba worth \$90 million. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide funding.

Hazen and Sawyer Consultants design a \$65 million plan to restructure and rehabilitate the supply system of 16 zones in the Greater Amman area to improve the water distribution system and reduce water leaks and losses.

Officials estimates that more than 50 per cent of the annual 300 million cubic metres of domestic water supplies are lost each year due to both a worn-out water network and theft. It has been reported that these losses cost the treasury JD15 million a year.

Last year, an Italian firm operating in a joint-venture with a local consulting firm was awarded a contract to design a \$20 million project to ensure the supply of water

for Al Rashid and Kharabsh distribution zones.

Also, the government awarded a \$55 million 51-month contract, granted by the World Bank, to manage the capital's water and wastewater to a French company.

The Greater Amman Municipality represents 45 per cent of the country's total drinking water consumption.

Montgomery Watson will conduct the feasibility study of the Aqaba Wastewater Treatment Plant, aiming at meeting the city's water wastewater treatment requirements in future.

The projects, scheduled to be completed within three years, are under the framework of five-year joint programme to preserve Jordan's scarce water resources. The programme includes rehabilitating 28 wells around the Kingdom to supply 450,000 citizens and constructing wastewater treatment facilities for the southern area of Wadi Mousa and North Shouneh in the Jordan Valley.

On Sunday, Mahadin announced the government's emergency scheme to deal with a possible crisis, presenting three shortage scenarios of increasing severity, all of which focus on whether the Zai plant will be able to perform at full capacity or not, and on the Amman and Balqa governorates, where the water shortage is expected to be most severe.

Mahadin revealed that among the 510 mcm of water pumped from private and public wells, only 275 mcm are taken within safe parameters.

The minister said neither how the government plans to cope with such depletion, nor plans to effectively promote public awareness on water saving.

Jordan's population is expected to increase from 5.3 million in 2000 to more than eight million by 2020 — a factor which will severely strain the country's water resources. The Kingdom's current water resources only amount to 960 mcm a year. Water deficit, projected to grow to 250 mcm by 2010 from 220 mcm in 1995, is being covered through the use of groundwater resources, some non-renewable, at over 200 per cent of their safe yields.

For long-term projects to handle Jordan's chronic water shortage, Mahadin said a local firm contracted by the ministry has drilled a kilometre-deep well in Lajoun, near Karak, to inspect part of water layers of the 300,000-year-old Disi aquifer, which might deliver 100 mcm of water to Amman by 2005. Another JD600,000 well will be drilled five kilometres away from the well, which has a pumping capacity of 150 metres per hour.

The government said that to supply Karak and Amman with water from this part of the aquifer, another eight wells must be drilled and a conveyance system must be constructed. Preliminary cost for the project is estimated at JD10 million.

But the plan will not be an alternative to the Disi-Amman conveyance project, which entail drilling wells, building a pumping station and a 325-kilometre water pipeline from the non-renewable Disi aquifer.

Amman residents will have to pay JD1.3 for each cubic metre conveyed from Disi to Amman. They currently pay 300 fils for each metre.

The capital, home to almost half of the Kingdom's population of 4.6 million, has had to bear a water rationing programme almost every summer for the last 10 years.

At present around 50 mcm from the Disi aquifer is exploited for agricultural use by 15 privately-owned farms free of charge under a 25-year concession agreement granted by the government in 1985. Another 14 mcm is extracted from the aquifer, which is also used by Saudi Arabia and Israel, for domestic purposes in Aqaba. Water experts say the aquifer is already over-exploited, with an annual drop of 80-85 centimetres in its level. They are also worried about pollution of the non-renewable aquifer and stress that agricultural use in the area must stop.

Doctors agast at 'appalling' health and medical services conditions in Iraq

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — Twenty-five Western doctors, nurses and medical students said after a recent visit to Baghdad that the nine-year-old U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq must be lifted immediately to ease the human suffering of ordinary citizens.

During their trip, sponsored by the Washington-based nationwide Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, the delegates distributed medicine, medical books and other relief material and inspected several hospitals.

They spoke of appalling health conditions, of increasing malnutrition and of daily suffering under economic sanctions that have banned nearly all trade with Iraq, apart from medicine, essential food and

other humanitarian supplies. "My sensibilities as a physician were overwhelmed by what I saw," said Allan Connolly, a Canadian psychiatrist. "As a physician, one of the toughest things for me was to walk into a ward with mothers — their eyes filled with hope looking at me — and they thought I was going to be able to help," he said in an interview with the Jordan Times earlier this week.

"But you can't. I couldn't handle the fact that I was unable to do anything," he said. Connolly said many Iraqis, especially children, were dying from diseases that could be easily treated if enough medicine were available.

Connolly also spoke of a sharp rise in unprecedented cases of leukaemia and malfor-

mations in newborn children. "These illnesses are related to a combination of circumstances and perhaps [to] the use of depleted uranium [by allied forces during the Gulf War]," he added.

Australian general practitioner Sue Wareham said the delegation found that between 4,500 and 6,000 children die each month because they lack basic food and medical care.

Most deaths are caused by treatable or preventable illnesses such as gastrointestinal and respiratory infections resulting from malnutrition, she added.

"The de facto withholding of food and medicine from a population for political reasons is contrary to all medical and humanitarian ethics," said Wareham.

"It is and is a totally unacceptable violation of human rights. If people in Australia could see the degree of suffering which results from policies supported by our government, they would be appalled and ashamed," The United Nations has allowed Iraq to sell \$2.26 billion worth of oil over six months to buy food and medicine as it reels under sanctions that were imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. U.N. teams supervise the distribution of food under the "oil-for-food deal" to ensure it reaches the needy, instead of top officials. The delegation said that sanctions had prevented major repair and maintenance of essential infrastructure that was badly damaged during the 1991 Gulf War.

Unsafe water, malnutrition, infectious disease, parasites and inadequate medicine have resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of children, added delegate Bert Sacks, of the "Voices in the Wilderness," an American non-governmental organisation that has organised 21 relief trips to Iraq over the past three years.

Cholera, malaria, polio and other diseases, nearly nonexistent in Iraq before 1990, have recurred.

The delegation included members from the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Australia and Palestine. It was organised by Geni Haynes, hospice consultant, Children's Hospital & Medical Centre, Seattle.

These trips are the brainchild of Kathy Kelly, from Voices in the Wilderness, who wants to use these visits to show people around the world

the tragic consequences of the crippling sanctions. Kelly, who spent the first two weeks of the Gulf War in a peace camp in Iraq, later spent six months in Jordan to monitor the situation before deciding to embark on relief missions.

"I realised that war was not over after the bombardment, and that the situation of the civilians in Iraq worsened due to the sanctions," said Kelly, a former teacher in Chicago.

"The U.S. should have strengthened the people and the growth of the middle class in order to make them able to bring about social changes [by themselves]," Kelly told the Jordan Times on Tuesday, a day before leading a new group of 15 people to Iraq.

The delegation found that Iraqis, especially doctors, were suffering from "intellectual" deprivation brought about by the sanctions.

"Nearly nine years of sanctions on current medical information have deprived Iraqi physicians of their right to life-saving knowledge," said cardiologist Robert Haynes from Seattle, Washington.

"Under these difficult circumstances, physicians and university professors find it difficult to keep up with latest medical advances and to pass on their knowledge to students," he added.

"The problem is, once they are updated, they don't find the proper equipment and medicine to put their knowledge into practice," said Haynes.

"Medical students have to use copies of copied textbooks which are now nine to ten years old," explained Benjamin Scott Luna, a U.S. medical student.

The delegation delivered medical books to the School of Medicine at the University of Baghdad and shared medical expertise with local doctors.

Canadian artist Doryk Houston, who accompanied the team, laid out a design showing a mother holding a baby in her hands in the garden of the Rashid Hotel.

"Maybe when the American and British pilots who come to bomb Iraq see the image of a child held in the hands of its mother they will begin to awaken and to realise that the bombing of the infrastructure and the bombing of the oil pipelines has terrible impact on Iraq,"

Prodi welcomed in European parliament

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Former Italian Premier Romano Prodi pledged Tuesday to rid the European Commission of corruption as he presented his bid for the EU executive's top job to European parliamentarians.

In his first address to the full 626-member assembly, Prodi promised to reform the European Union's executive commission.

The outgoing commission resigned en masse on March 15 after a report found it guilty of mismanagement.

"I and my commissioners will commit ourselves to drive Europe into a great age of reform and change," Prodi said to applause from parliamentarians in Strasbourg, France.

He said commission reforms would focus on three key priorities: increased efficiency, absolute openness and accountability.

"We will not tolerate corruption in any form," Prodi said.

"There will be full accountability also as far as individual commissioners are concerned."

The leader of the Socialist group, the largest faction in the EU parliament, complimented Prodi on his record at the helm of the Italian government.

"You come with excellent credentials as a good European. You come with a proven track record of personal integrity," Pauline Green told the former premier.

"Hopes in this parliament of just what you can achieve with those formidable skills as president of the European Commission are high."

Prodi first grabbed the attention of Europe's leaders last year when he put Italy's shaky finances in order in time to qualify for the launch of the euro.

Buoyed by Italians' unwavering enthusiasm for the euro, the former economics professor slashed spending and pushed through unpopular tax hikes during his 2 1/2 years as premier.

The European People's Party, the second-largest group in the parliament, also greeted Prodi effusively.

"We support you with all the powers in our hands, unambiguously, and without setting any political conditions," EPP leader Wilfried Martens told Prodi.

Together the Socialists and the EPP — Christian democrats — make up two-thirds of the European parliament.

EU leaders designated Prodi as their candidate for

commission president last month.

The parliament, which must approve Prodi's appointment before he can take on the commission job, has said it will vote in May.

It said, however, that the appointment of the other 19 commissioners should be left up to the new parliament, after EU legislative polls scheduled in June.

Parliamentarians also welcomed Prodi's announcement that he had decided to drop his bid for a parliament seat.

In meetings with the assembly's political groups last week, he initially had indicated he hoped to hold both a parliamentary seat and a commission job.

"There is nothing in the law that forbids me from being a candidate (to the EU parliament)," Prodi said. "However, I think my standing at the elections ... could cause division, and I'm not here to divide. I'm here to unite."

Many in the parliament, including the Socialists, said last week they felt Prodi would not be able to carry out his work properly if he tried to do the two jobs at once.

In his statement, Prodi told parliamentarians that the EU's enlargement to include several candidates from Eastern European



Italian, Romano Prodi (right) designated successor of current President of the European Commission Jacques Santer, addresses the European Parliament in Strasbourg before his meeting with the presidents of the political groups of the European Assembly on April 13. Prodi will be officially invested during next month's session of the European Assembly (Reuters photo)

countries, as well as Cyprus and Malta, would be high on his agenda.

"We must make haste to set a schedule for enlargement and to lay down the conditions for it," he said.

The outgoing commission resigned after a committee of independent experts

appointed by the parliament presented a report charging the EU executive with mismanagement.

Individual commissioners had come under fire over recent months for alleged fraud and nepotism, particularly the outgoing EU commissioner for research,

Edith Cresson, accused of hiring a friend who was unqualified.

The outgoing commission's mandate runs out at the end of the year. It is unclear when the new commission will take office, but the process is likely to take months.

NEWS IN BRIEF

China regrets NATO bombing of Yugoslav train

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday said it deeply regretted NATO's bombing of a railway bridge in southern Serbia which also wrecked a train, leaving 10 dead and scores injured. "We have expressed our regret over this tragic event. We urge NATO to stop military action against Yugoslavia to alleviate the humanitarian disaster there," foreign affairs ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said at a regular news conference. Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji in Washington on Friday rejected NATO's military campaign against Yugoslavia as unwarranted meddling in the affairs of a sovereign country. "Ethnic conflicts belong in the area of internal affairs," he said in an interview with PBS television. "Our feeling is that to interfere in the internal affairs of another country ... to use military action in the circumstance is not correct." China, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, has bitterly criticised the U.S.-led air strikes launched on March 24 as interference in another country's affairs. At least 10 people died Monday when two NATO missiles struck a 50 metre bridge over the Jozna Morava River at Ordelica Klisura, some 300 kilometres south of Belgrade, wrecking a passing train. In Brussels, NATO admitted a passenger train was "on or near" a bridge when it was destroyed.

Indonesian students resume anti-government protests

JAKARTA (AP) — Hundreds of students protested outside parliament on Tuesday and called on Indonesians to boycott a June 7 general election, which they claim will not be fair or democratic. About 800 university and high school students gathered in two groups outside or near the legislature. They were blocked by several hundred troops. There were no reports of violence. However, a major road outside the parliament was closed, causing a major downtown traffic jam. Tuesday's protest was the biggest in Jakarta for many weeks. Demonstrations by tens of thousands of students in May led to the resignation of authoritarian President Suharto, who had ruled the world's fourth most populous nation for 32 years. Suharto, like many Indonesians, uses only one name. Suharto's successor, President B.J. Habibie, has called the June election and promises it will be the freest ballot held since 1955. Forty-eight political parties are to contest the election, compared with only three officially sanctioned parties permitted during Suharto's era. Nevertheless, the student says they remain unhappy about the scope and pace of political change. Student leaders have demanded Habibie resign and a transitional government be put in place to enact sweeping changes to the political system. "We reject the election because it is only a way to maintain the status quo," said Samin, a protest organizer. "We also demand Habibie to step down because he is proven to be incapable." One banner unfurled at Tuesday's protest said: "Reject election, reject Habibie," in a related development, an imprisoned political activist remained in a Jakarta hospital Tuesday on a hunger strike to protest the election. Budiman Sudjatmiko, general chairman of the People's Democratic Party, and six other officials of the party launched the hunger strike seven days ago. Budiman was hospitalised on Monday after he vomited blood.

China police museum to boost youthful patriotism

SHANGHAI (R) — China plans to open its first police museum complete with displays devoted to prisons through its history and heroic officers felled in the line of duty. The museum will throw open its doors on June 2 in the eastern city of Shanghai, the official Shanghai Star newspaper reported on Tuesday. "It is expected to be a patriotic education centre for young policemen and youngsters in the city," museum official Sun Hao was quoted as saying. The museum would trace the modern history of Shanghai's police since 1843, the newspaper said. Other galleries would be devoted to firearms and traffic control equipment.

Trussardi in coma after car crash

MILAN (R) — Italian fashion designer Nicola Trussardi was in critical condition in hospital on Tuesday after a car accident, a Milan hospital said. The designer, 56, is in intensive care in a coma, the Italian news agency ANSA reported. "Mr. Trussardi is on the danger list," Vito Corrao, director general at Milan's Fatebenefratelli hospital told a press briefing, declining to make further comment. Trussardi's family had asked the hospital not to speak to the press about his condition. Corrao said, Trussardi is married with four children. Trussardi's car spun out of control on a highway exit outside Milan shortly after midnight on Monday night, ANSA said, pinning the designer underneath the steering wheel. Firefighters struggled to free him for more than an hour. Trussardi manufactures and sells luxury leather accessories and clothing. The family-owned and managed business was founded in 1911 by Trussardi's grandfather Dante Trussardi. Trussardi's sales in its 118 boutiques around the world were about \$485 million in 1998.

Three stowaways found dead in banana ship at Tokyo port

TOKYO (AFP) — Three stowaways were found dead in the cargo hold of a banana ship from Ecuador that entered Tokyo's port Tuesday, a coastguard official said. "We believe they suffocated," said an official from the maritime safety agency after the bodies were discovered in the refrigerated, nitrogen gas-filled hold. Officials were still checking the stowaways' nationalities and ages and the cause of their death. The coastguard said it found the three bodies following a tip from a Japanese transport company about three stowaways on the Danish-registered 14,406-tonne Knud Lauritzen, which arrived here earlier in the day from Ecuador.

Philippines rejects release of jailed rebels

MANILA (R) — The Philippine government on Tuesday brushed aside an appeal by Communist rebels to free dozens of jailed leftists in exchange for the release of two army officers from guerrilla captivity. "We never struck any deal about the release of ... the detainees," President Joseph Estrada told reporters. Presidential spokesman Jerry Barican said the rebels should stick to an earlier agreement to release army general Victor Obillo and his aide without condition. The release of the two officers is expected to clear the way for a resumption in peace talks between Manila and the rebels. Estrada had suspended the talks after the guerrillas abducted the pair on Feb. 17 on the southern island of Mindanao. Obillo and his aide were among five army and police officers held captive by the New People's Army (NPA), which has been fighting for a Marxist state for 30 years. The NPA freed two captives last week and agreed to release Obillo and his aide on Friday and a captive sergeant by April 19 provided the military withdrew from areas where they were being held and suspended offensive operations. A rebel spokesman said on Monday the government could show good will by releasing in turn 50 dissidents now in its custody. "The Communists should release the hostages unconditionally and immediately," Barican said.

N. Irish politicians fight to save peace deal

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam told 'politicians trying to get a peace deal back on track on Tuesday to reflect on the potential price of failure.

"All people have to do is look at the pain and suffering that violence is producing elsewhere in the world today. I hope we can make good progress," Mowlam, the minister in charge of the British province, told reporters.

She was speaking as talks reopened in the provincial capital aimed at ending a deadlock over guerrilla disarmament which has held up progress on a peace deal signed a year ago.

The accord promised some home-rule after a 30-year conflict waged by the Catholic-backed Irish Republican Army (IRA) to end British rule and Protestant militias fighting to prolong it.

Protestant leader David Trimble insists the IRA must hand in some arms before its Sinn Fein political wing takes up its two seats on a coalition cabinet at the province's helm.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Ireland's Bertie Ahern are ready to fly in if the politicians find a compromise.

But Sinn Fein has rejected outright the "Hillsborough Declaration" the two leaders issued on April 1 after leading four days of talks which failed to end the disarmament row.

Blair and Ahern — who is

called Taoiseach in Irish — not expected to arrive before Thursday and only if progress is made. "Even prime ministers are subject to the law of diminishing returns," one senior source close to the talks said.

Mowlam told reporters: "I am sure that they will show at some point but we don't have any specific date yet." Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams and his chief lieutenant, Martin McGuinness, met Trimble and Reg Empey, another senior member of Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party, before joining other politicians for round-table talks.

"All talks are progress," said McGuinness, who is Sinn Fein's contact man on an international disarmament commission.

His party, which shares the IRA's goal of a united Ireland, had not moved from its stance that the declaration was a rewrite of the original peace deal's vision for disarmament.

The accord foresaw disarmament being completed by May 2000, setting no start date for a process which the two governments, centrist parties and many in the province want to start sooner.

Mowlam appealed to the politicians to stop squabbling, saying in a statement: "If people are only prepared to fight their own corner then nothing the prime minister or the Taoiseach can do will help." The peace deal brought hope after 30 years of bombs and bullets which

claimed more than 3,600 lives.

It addressed Protestant interests by promising to maintain British sovereignty unless a majority chose Irish unity, while building stronger links between the province and the Irish republic, blurring a burden which many Catholics want removed.

The outlook for the Hillsborough Declaration, however, is not good as not only the IRA but also hard-liners among their Protestant foes have rejected it.

The Blair-Ahern blueprint said disarmament must be a voluntary act and made clear that weapons must be "put beyond use" to clear the way for the coalition executive.

The powerful Ulster Unionists view the declaration as "a basis for negotiation" but want it clarified. They are sticking to their position that a "credible and verifiable beginning" to disarmament must take place before Sinn Fein enters the cabinet.

Under the peace accord, some 300 guerrillas have been granted early freedom from prison and Britain has begun to wind down its military presence as guerrilla truces hold.

But violence by dissident groups remains a danger and the province is moving into a period of annual street parades by Protestants that trigger tension with Catholic Republicans.

'Italian ventilation shaft fanned tunnel inferno'

PARIS (AFP) — A decision by Italian officials to open a ventilation shaft when a fire broke out last month in the Mont Blanc tunnel linking France and Italy may have fanned the inferno, in which at least 41 people died, a preliminary report said Tuesday.

The report by French experts on the March 24 disaster, the worst road-tunnel blaze recorded worldwide, said the decision to set the ventilator on maximum, blowing air onto the flames, was not the only explanation behind the tragedy however.

There has been widespread outrage and speculation as to how a fire that broke out on a single Belgian-registered truck carrying margarine and flour through the lengthy 11.6-kilometre tunnel could have caused an inferno that engulfed 35 vehicles and claimed so many lives.

"The fact that fresh air was introduced into the zone where the fire was developing, instead of extracting the smoke, is undoubtedly an important element that needs to be taken into account in analysing the swift flare-up of the blaze," the report said.

But the report also cited the lack of ventilation shafts midway along the tunnel, the failure to have built a parallel evacuation tunnel when the passage was first carved through the Alps in 1965, and poor coordination between its French and Italian operators.

It took firefighters battling plumes of acid smoke and searing temperatures several days to extinguish the blaze and investigators so far have

been able to identify only eight of the charred corpses found in the molten wreckage.

The report said 34 of the victims were found dead inside their vehicles, probably asphyxiated by fumes within several minutes, "before being reached by the flames." Seven bodies were found elsewhere in the tunnel.

Temperatures reached 1,300 degrees Celsius in the tunnel, the main road link between France and Italy. Some 5,000 vehicles passed through daily, including 2,000 trucks.

The report said it had no criticism of rescue operations, though a new inquiry would delve further into the matter.

But efforts to reach drivers trapped in the inferno had been hampered by "the exceptional scope" of the blaze and "the current lack of a firetruck technically capable of confronting a blaze in such extreme conditions of heat, smoke and lack of oxygen."

The report however slammed the general lack of cooperation between the French and Italian operators, ATMB and SITMB, saying there was no co-management enabling joint decisions or renovation of the 34-year tunnel.

The report said a decision on the Italian side of the tunnel by SITMB to set a ventilation shaft on their side to maximum "could explain the speed and violence of the blaze."

But it added that it would be "mistaken to conclude a pri-

ori that this was the determining element or the only one responsible."

The tunnel notably "has no safety tunnel allowing people in danger to be evacuated or facilitating the arrival of rescue services," the report said.

Because of its location under Alpine rock, there is no fresh air available in emergency shelters inside the tunnel and "no intermediate ventilation shafts," it added.

The report said that as soon as the alarm was given at 10:56 a.m. local, ATMB set its ventilation on maximum extraction mode, to rid the tunnel of smoke, while SITMB said it had done the opposite, blowing air into the tunnel.

"At the time this report was written we do not know the reasons for this decision," the French report said.

The report said the inferno had involved 24 lorries, nine cars, a motorbike and two vehicles belonging to ATMB. It also put the number of victims who died at 41, instead of the previous toll of 40. Police have received requests on the whereabouts of a total 45 missing people who could have been in the tunnel at the time.

Since its opening in 1965, there had been 15 other fires in the tunnel "but none of the blazes had affected a second vehicle."

French Transport Minister Jean-Claude Gaysot said this week that the tunnel, which suffered considerable damage, would be closed several months.

Japan says catching up in Y2K readiness

TOKYO (R) — The government's leading expert on the Millennium bug says Japan has made big strides in its prevention efforts since late last year and expects no disastrous computer problems at the dawn of the year 2000.

Takeo Shiina, the head of the government's advisory panel on Millennium compliance, told Reuters in an interview this week that Japan is no longer lagging behind other developed nations in Y2K readiness.

"We are now at least keeping step with other Millennium advanced nations and are even ahead of them in some sectors, such as finance," Shiina,

also the chairman of IBM Japan, told Reuters.

"The chance of things like a collapse in infrastructure — like electricity, gas, water, communications — on Jan. 1, 2000, or Y2K issues making any noticeable impact on the nation's gross domestic product is very unlikely," Shiina said.

Shiina's panel was set up last September by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi in response to concerns that Japan was not doing enough to fight the computer bug.

Shiina said since the government stepped in, public awareness has been enhanced, helping to speed up government and private-

sector progress on Y2K compliance programmes.

The year 2000 computer problem, known as Y2K, arises because many computers and their software until recently allocated only two digits for the year in a date.

Unless computers are repaired or replaced, the year 2000 may be read as 1900, causing computers to crash or make mistakes.

U.S. research group Gartner group said earlier this month that Japan has moved into a higher bracket of nations in its readiness for Y2K problems.

Andy Kyte, research director at Gartner group, said

that in a survey based on the fourth quarter of 1998, Japan's infrastructure risk was ranked at level two on a scale of four, along with countries such as Brazil, Germany, South Korea, Mexico and Thailand.

At level two, Gartner predicts isolated and moderate risks of power loss, natural gas interruptions, air transport interruptions and oil shortages.

Shiina said that while large Japanese enterprises are making good progress in fixing computer programmes and running through simulation tests, the panel's major concerns are slow progress by small and medium-sized

enterprises as well and fixing programmes in embedded chips.

The advisory panel had drawn up and distributed contingency programmes for small businesses, including detailed check sheets to gauge their progress in Y2K compliance measures, Shiina said.

In a survey at the end of March, 23 per cent of small and medium-sized firms said they were still not Y2K ready. That is down from 33 per cent last September.

The government has offered free Y2K assistance to these enterprises by allocating about eight billion yen (\$66.6 million) out of its

total 19.3 billion yen budget for Millennium bug preparation in the 1999/2000 fiscal year, Shiina said.

Shiina said virtually all firms in the nation's five key industries — finance, transport, energy, telecommunications and medicine — will have finished running simulation tests by October.

At home, some consumers may have trouble in programming video recorders or using fax machines' resending functions on January 1, 2000. But the panel said it does not see major problems arising in such products as cars and elevators.

BRIEF

NATO bombing
lav train

Public... regretted... NATO... bombing... lav train...
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...regretted... NATO... bombing... lav train...

idents resume
tent protests

ce museum
nful patriotism

na after car crash

was found dead
at Tokyo port

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NO LAUGHING STOCK — Seattle Post-Intelligencer editorial cartoonist David Horsey has won a 1999 Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Editorial Cartoon. He sits with some of his award-winning work at the Post-Intelligencer newsroom on April 12. Horsey, 47, has been on the P-I staff since 1979, and his cartoons are syndicated in more than 450 newspapers and magazines worldwide (Reuters photo)

Judge holds Clinton in contempt in Paula Jones case

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton faces a new blot on his record and thousands of dollars in fresh legal expenses after a federal judge cited him for contempt of court.

Historians believe he is the first U.S. chief executive to receive such a penalty.

U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright concluded Monday that the president lied about his relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky in a Jan. 17, 1998, deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case.

"Simply put, the president's deposition testimony was intentionally false," Wright wrote.

The judge ordered Clinton to pay Mrs. Jones "any reasonable expenses including attorneys' fees caused by his willful failure to obey this court's discovery orders" and also to pay \$1,202 as reimbursement for the judge's travel in the case.

One option is for Clinton to use his legal defense fund, which has raised \$4.5 million, to pay the sanction.

Clinton's lawyers were mum, leaving their options open until they see what sort of penalty Mrs. Jones requests. One of her lawyers said Monday night it could be tens of thousands of dollars.

Wright, however, hinted in her ruling if Clinton attempts to contest her findings, it

could have political costs for a president eager to put the impeachment crisis behind him that ended in January when he was acquitted on perjury and obstruction of justice charges in the senate.

"This court is fully aware that the president may have engaged in other ... conduct warranting punishment and if Clinton exercises his right to contest the finding it would open the door for hearings complete with witnesses 'on all matters concerning the president's conduct,'" she warned.

At her home in Cabot, Arkansas, Mrs. Jones was overjoyed.

"Ah! Ta ta ta ta. That's all I have to say," she said, waving her hands above her head and dancing. Asked whether she believed the sanction against the president was good for the country, Mrs. Jones said, "I could care less. It's not about that, it's about what he did." The judge also set in motion a process that could strip Clinton of his law license, referring of the president's testimony to the Arkansas supreme court's committee on professional conduct.

Wright said she would delay enforcement for 30 days to give Clinton an opportunity to ask for a hearing or to appeal.

"I think it's a vindication," said John Whitehead, one of Mrs. Jones's lawyers. "This is

the first event in the whole proceeding where the president was actually held accountable in the end." Historians said they believed the action was a first.

"I have never heard of any case where a president has been found in contempt in a civil case," said Mark Rozell, a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania.

Clinton's historical "box-core" will say in part "first elected president impeached and first to be held in contempt while in office," said Rozell.

Senior presidential aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Clinton lawyers regarded the penalty as less severe since the judge had the option of making a criminal referral against the president to the U.S. attorney's office.

The judge said any finding of criminal contempt would have required a more lengthy process involving hearings and taking evidence. Also, she noted that much of Clinton's conduct had been investigated by the independent counsel's office and she wanted to "prevent any potential double jeopardy issues from arising."

Robert Bennett, the private lawyer who represented Clinton in the Jones case, said he would have no comment on the judge's ruling "until I have had the opportunity of reviewing this matter fully."

Rep. Asa Hutchinson, the Arkansas Republican who was one of the house prosecutors in the impeachment trial, said a "Nonpartisan and non-political judge" found the president had wilfully disobeyed court orders to be truthful and "I have to underline the 'wilful' part of her ruling."

The office of independent counsel Kenneth Starr, whose investigation prompted the impeachment crisis, declined comment Monday night.

Wright said her decision to dismiss the Jones case a year ago would not have changed, even if the president had been "truthful with respect to his relationship with Ms. Lewinsky." Mrs. Jones appealed the dismissal, but then settled the case by accepting an \$850,000 payment from Clinton.

In his deposition in the Jones case, Clinton said: "I have never had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky." But after his DNA was found on a dress belonging to Ms. Lewinsky, he acknowledged an "inappropriate intimate relationship" with her before a federal grand jury and in a nationally televised address.

Clinton said the relationship did not fall under the definition of "sexual relations" provided by Mrs. Jones' lawyers during his deposition, and that his testimony was legally accurate.

'Pakistan wipes out drug production, Afghanistan a disaster'

DIR, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistan is a success story for the United Nations drug control programme, while next door in war-battered Afghanistan it's a disaster, a senior U.N. official said Tuesday.

In Pakistan's rugged northwest frontier province the poppy crop has been eliminated, said Pino Arlacchi, executive Director of the U.N. Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

The United Nations has been working for more than one decade in the region to rid the country of poppy production. The last hold-out was the Dir region — a fiercely independent tribal belt in a remote and rugged part of northwestern Pakistan.

Just two years ago in Dir there were poppies growing on 10,400 hectares.

This year the crop has been eliminated, in part because Pakistani anti-narcotics officials burned several thousand acres of poppy crop last month. That represented the last of the rebel farmers who still

planted poppies this year. "It is the biggest success story and we reduced opium production to almost zero in Pakistan," said Arlacchi.

But next door in Afghanistan it's a different story, he said.

There 45 per cent of the world's opium is produced for distribution to markets in Europe and North America.

From poppies farmers extract opium which is the raw material used to produce heroin.

The conversion from opium to heroin is done in makeshift laboratories hidden in the remote and dangerous tribal regions that run along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Arlacchi told reporters, who accompanied him on a helicopter visit to remote mountain regions of Pakistan, that Afghanistan's Taleban rulers destroyed 32 laboratories.

"That was a good sign, but that is not enough," he said.

And when he meets the hardline Islamic Taleban

army later this week he will urge them to send a "clear signal to the international community that they are ready to eradicate drug production."

Then, he said the United Nations will offer assistance to provide alternative development.

For the Taleban however that's not good enough.

They say that they won't stop poppy cultivation until the international community comes up with enough money to make it worth it for farmers to switch to another crop.

That means an infrastructure that works. In most of Afghanistan the irrigation canals and roads have been destroyed by 20 years of war. That also means industry to create jobs for the unemployed who currently work in poppy fields bleeding the swollen bulbs of the milky white opium inside.

In Pakistan farmers also warned the United Nations and the local administration that they need more financial aid to find a lucrative alternative crop.

"For the last 39 years I

have been growing poppies and this year I did not stop by my choice, but because the government destroyed my crops," said Malik Faiz Mohammed, an area farmer. "Our children are hungry and we don't have any alternative crop," he said.

"I will start poppy growing again unless I get help," he warned.

So far the U.N. drug control programme has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in northwest Pakistan, building an infrastructure of roads, schools and some factories. Money also has been spent on alternative crops.

But farmers want more. "We have fulfilled our commitment to the international community by destroying all the poppy crop, which was the only cash crop for some of the farmers here," said Haji Inayat Khan, a Pakistani parliamentarian representing the area.

"Now they should be provided with alternative resources for their livelihood," he told Arlacchi.

Bhutto warns of conspiracy against women, human rights lawyer received death threats

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Angered by the murder of a young woman because she wanted a divorce, Benazir Bhutto sent a passionate letter to international human rights groups Tuesday warning of a "conspiracy against women" in Pakistan.

"There is an all-encompassing conspiracy against women ... in the name of Islam," Ms. Bhutto warned in her letter.

"Our society today is in the hands of fundamentalists who are openly opposed to women having any rights and any chance of justice," she said.

Twice elected prime minister, Ms. Bhutto said her letter was prompted by the murder last week of 32-year-old Samia Imran, who was shot and killed by a gunman hired by her parents, Ms.

Imran's mother brought the gunman to kill her daughter. Also on Tuesday Pakistan's prominent human rights lawyer Asma Jahangir, who was representing Ms. Imran, said she has been receiving death threats from Islamic radicals since the shooting.

"Threats to kill me are being made publicly and people are being exhorted to commit violence against me," said Ms. Jahangir in a statement released from Geneva, where she is attending a human rights conference.

The same people have taken out large advertisements in Urdu-language newspapers calling on the faithful to "punish" Ms. Jahangir, who also operates a shelter for abused women. The advertisements have condemned the shelters as

against Islam and encouraging women to embrace greater freedom.

Ms. Imran was shot and killed at the office of Ms. Jahangir and her sister, Hina Jilani, who also is a lawyer. Threats also have been made against Ms. Jilani.

"We have a right not only to protest against such barbaric acts, but also to point towards the social attitudes that become the cause of the commission of such crimes," Ms. Jahangir said.

Ms. Imran was shot and killed because she sought a divorce from her husband, something her father, who is from the deeply conservative northwest frontier province said would dishonour the family.

Although both parents already said they masterminded the killing, no arrests have been made.

A police official, Saud Aziz, said the murder is under investigation and police officials have gone to Peshawar, the provincial capital of the frontier province, to interview Ms. Imran's father.

He didn't say whether any arrests would be made.

Several women's protests have been staged in Lahore demanding the arrest of Ms. Imran's father, who is a powerful businessman in the frontier province.

"The government has shown complete insensitivity towards this naked violation of the rule of law," said Ms. Jahangir. "Why has the government failed to take action against persons publicly announcing their intent to kill me and are blatantly publicising this threat with their names through the press?"

Small bomb explodes in Hong Kong department store

HONG KONG (AP) — A small bomb exploded Tuesday in a Hong Kong branch of a Japanese retail chain that recently received two extortion threats and a bomb warning, police said.

The blast blew out windows and threw a 45-year-old woman into shock, although no one was physically harmed.

About 300 grammes of high explosives had been stuffed into a tin can and placed in a plastic bag in a restaurant of the Tuen Mun Jusco, said divisional Commander Ricky Hung.

About 40 people were in the area, but the nearest occupied table was about 15 metres away from the blast. Hung said the explosion blew out six thick windows.

Jusco issued a statement saying it had taken precautions — including closing the Tuen Mun store for five hours on March 29 after receiving a bomb threat — but that Tuesday's blast caught the company off guard.

Jusco apologised to the woman who was sent into a state of

shock and promised tighter security, including more video monitors in its stores.

District Commander Jan Seabourne did not rule out involvement from Chinese gangs or "triads," saying the authorities had "serious leads" and have referred the matter to the organised crime bureau.

Hung said the Jusco Store in Tuen Mun of the suburban new territories received an extortion threat on March 18 for 800,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$103,000), but the explosion Tuesday morning occurred "without warning."

Another Jusco branch received an extortion demand for 500,000 Hong Kong dollars (\$64,000) in mid-March, while a third branch received a bomb threat, Hung said.

The 45-year-old victim, whom police identified by her surname Ma, suffered shock but no physical injuries, Seabourne said. She was treated at a hospital and released, said a police spokeswoman, Cynthia Au.

Indonesian rights group to form commission on Timor

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's state-funded rights watchdog said Tuesday it would form a commission to help settle disputes between rival factions in East Timor.

"This commission will consist of all elements of community in East Timor," Marzuki Dardusman, chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), told journalists after meeting with President B.J. Habibie.

The broad composition of the new commission would enable all factions to "play a role in creating a conducive climate toward a solution" to the East Timor violence.

He said the commission would include the church, pro-integrationists as well as anti-Indonesian Timorese, including the pro-independence National Council of East Timorese Resistance (CNRT).

The armed forces and the Jakarta government would also have representatives on the commission, which "will be established soon."

Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, who attended the meeting, said Habibie hailed the commission's plan. "The commission must work to ensure that all warring parties put down their guns," Alatas told journalists, referring to the mounting violence in the former Portuguese colony ahead of a planned ballot on independence under United Nations auspices.

Habibie had also ordered authorities in East Timor to help the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with its work in Liquisa, the scene of a bloody incident last week where the church says at least 25 people were massacred by pro-integration militia.

The ICRC Friday said threats to their security had prevented them from helping the victims of the Liquisa massacre. The ICRC had earlier been invited to investigate Tuesday's incident by the Indonesian defence ministry, but it said its role was to provide help to the victims.

Habibie also called on the Komnas HAM to visit Liquisa "to collect the facts and to obtain a clear picture of what really happened there," he said.

Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it the following year, a move never recognised by the United Nations and most other countries.

Tension between pro- and anti-independence groups in East Timor has heightened since Jakarta in January said it was prepared to grant the territory freedom if the population there rejected a U.N.-sponsored broad autonomy package.

China gears up for sensitive anniversaries, boasts of rights record

BEIJING (AFP) — China Tuesday geared up for a series of sensitive 10th anniversaries, as police rounded up dissidents and the state went on the offensive to trumpet its human rights achievements.

Police detained dissident Wang Ke before he could leave for a ceremony to mark Thursday's 10th anniversary of the death of disgraced Communist Party head Hu Yaobang, the Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said.

Wang's whereabouts were unknown after he was taken from his home in southern Hainan before he could leave for De'an, in eastern Jiangxi province, where a memorial commemorating Hu's death was to take place.

The death of the liberal Hu on April 15, 1989, acted as one of the catalysts for the widespread democracy protests which culminated in the military's bloody repression on Tiananmen Square on June 4.

Last week in northern Xian, four dissidents were briefly detained for planning to pay homage to Hu and were only released after they promised not to visit his grave, the centre said.

Lin Mu, Hu's former secretary and now a voice in China's dissident community, has called on political activists to meet in De'an to mark Hu's passing, it said.

Lin has been told he will be accompanied by a police escort on his pilgrimage. Hu was purged as party head in early 1987 after taking a lax stand on small-scale 1986 student democracy protests in Beijing.

He was admired by Chinese intellectuals for his role in the era after the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution when he rehabilitated a huge number of people who had been unjustly purged. The Tibetan Information Network also said he would be remembered as the man who in a speech in Lhasa in 1980 offered an apology for Chinese rule of Tibet and proposed unprecedented policy changes.

But since Hu was eulogised as "a great Marxist" at his official funeral, Chinese police have apparently found it difficult to differentiate between the pilgrims wishing to visit his grave.

China's cabinet, the State Council, meanwhile issued a 13,000-word report on the country's human rights achievements in 1998, when it

was hit by its worst floods in decades and the Asian financial crisis.

The report underscored a government policy that places the rights of China's 1.25 billion people to food, clothing and shelter as its top priority.

Published by the official Xinhua news agency two days before the anniversary of Hu's death, the report did not mention the Tiananmen crackdown.

The 1989 military assault and the subsequent years of political repression created an outcry in Western countries, which united to condemn China's human rights record.

The article countered such criticisms by trumpeting 20 years of economic reforms that have raised the urban living conditions and the reform of the legal system.

"In China all power belongs to the people," it said, even boasting that the number of televisions owned per 100 households was above the world average.

Dissidents in Beijing have taken a low profile ahead of the anniversaries, with many expressing surprise that others planned a homage to Hu.

"Why would we want to go to sweep Hu Yaobang's grave?"

Wasn't Hu Yaobang in power when (dissidents) Wei Jingsheng and Xu Wenli were thrown in jail? What did he do for them?" free trade unionist and off-jailed dissident Zhou Guoqiang told AFP.

Bao Tong, the highest party member jailed due to the 1989 movement, said Hu would live on in the hearts of Chinese people because of his courage, but he was not planning to mark the occasion.

He sent an open letter to the party last month calling for a reassessment of the Tiananmen incident.

"If this letter can help China return to the road of democracy, this will be the best way to mourn Hu Yaobang," said Bao, who remains under house arrest.

Veteran democracy campaigner Ren Wandong called Hu an "enlightened Communist with liberal and democratic ideas," but said he would not make any special commemoration.

"Who would ever have thought that the death of a (Communist) leader would trigger such an event for our movement," said Wandong, who began campaigning during the 1978 Democracy Wall period.

Jordan Times

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Plug the drains

WHILE THE government's water contingency plans to face Jordan's officially declared state of drought appear to be reassuring, they still leave something to be desired. At a time when the public was counting on the government to assume control of privately-owned wells to bridge the gap between our national needs and what water is available under the most ideal circumstance, the Ministry of Water and Irrigation is contemplating drilling new wells at considerable cost and precisely when our water reserves are admittedly at record low levels.

While one appreciates private property and the protection of private ownership, there is a crisis of great magnitude before the Kingdom. As such, public will must supersede private interests. In emergencies, the government may seize private properties if and when public interest and security so dictate. Private well-owners continue to exploit the Kingdom's scarce water at the rate of 320 million cubic metres annually. About 1,654 private wells are depleting the nation's water resources; their owners pay only a fraction of the value of that water. What adds insult to injury is the fact that more than 500 of these wells are unlicensed and unregulated.

Another equally dangerous pitfall in our water consumption is preposterous loss of no less than 50 per cent of domestic water supplies each year due to worn out water pipe networks. Before we talk about contingency plans that envisage the deployment of a 300-tanker-fleet to meet the needs of 40 per cent of the residents of Amman under the worst case scenario that could develop during the summer, we should try to plug these two principal drains on our precious water as a matter of highest priority. Wasteful spending of water must stop before we embark on extreme contingency plans.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Taher Adwan said most ministers are spending many of their working hours outside their offices with the excuse of following up related issues, and they spend time for official and non-official receptions as well as to attend Parliament's session. This is a negative phenomenon, which was not solved when the former government changed the time of Cabinet sessions from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., said Adwan. Although field monitoring reflects a minister's desire to follow-up every detail, such flip-side is greater, because if a minister wants to monitor everything, what is left for the ministry's various departments to do, asked the writer. A visit does not adequately reflect reality because everybody knows that as soon as a minister arrives for inspection, employees "pretend" to work as they wake up from their "naps," he added. A minister should have a leadership function, which should not necessitate being involved in every detail unless it is necessary or when there is special concern. In developed countries, a minister's job is to implement the general policies of the government's programme regardless of the official's field of specialisation, said Adwan. Lack of policies to control such routines, the high level of administrative incompetence and insufficient administrative mechanisms of monitoring are the reasons behind the phenomenon, Adwan concluded.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Riham Farra commented on the swelling number of unlicensed wells in the Kingdom, which, according to Water and Irrigation Minister Kamel Mahadin, now amount to 400 and will be dealt with in line with the law. Farra argued that the number of unlicensed wells continued to grow daily while successive governments turned a blind eye to the issue, and whether they did so intentionally or not, the result was a great shortage in non-renewable underground water reserves. Consequently, some agricultural land has become salty and barren, in addition to the drought we are suffering, said the writer, who accused the concerned authorities who have never taken any measures to control these wells or punish their owners. Regardless of the reasons behind the water depletion such violation hints at a large problem regarding licensed wells, she said adding that many could have taken advantage of corruption to dig more wells. Wasted and stolen non-renewable water amounts are ten times Jordan's annual share from Israel, while wasted water equals three times the capital's needs, concluded Farra.

Washington Watch

Republicans debate isolationism

Dr. James J. Zogby

THE U.S. DEBATE over NATO's military campaign to stop Serbian crimes in Kosovo is exposing deep divisions within the Republican Party (GOP).

It has been clear for several years now, that there are conflicting currents within that party. During the 1996 presidential race, for example, the battle between the "social values" and "fiscal conservative" wings of the GOP was quite intense. While the issues raised by that debate (specifically abortion and economic protectionism) will no doubt be raised once again in 2000, the NATO campaign has exposed an equally deep intra-party conflict.

With 10 Republicans vying for the right to be the GOP presidential candidate in 2000, five of them have opposed the war and five have supported NATO's effort. Of those who are in opposition, a dominant theme running through their criticisms is isolationism. Those who are supportive argue the need for a strong U.S. military role that provides leadership in the post-Cold War world. On one side of this rift is Pat Buchanan, who is one of the leading spokespersons for the isolationist trend. He also champions traditional social morality and protectionism. Buchanan's view on the

war is quite direct: United States armed forces should not go into action unless American honour or American citizens or American vital interests are at stake. His message is: I don't think there's any vital national interest in whose flag should fly over Kosovo and I don't believe that the United States should be the world's cop looking for thugs to beat up.

On the other side of the GOP divide is Senator John McCain of Arizona.

Early on, when the hostilities first began, he coined the expression "when we're in it, we have no choice but to win it." McCain has termed the airwar as an inadequate response to the challenge of winning this war. His view: We must begin the mobilisation of our infantry and armoured divisions for possible ground war in Kosovo. We must be prepared to [use ground forces] or Milosevic will never be convinced.

Buchanan has been joined by four other 2000 GOP hopefuls who similarly argue that this conflict is not in the U.S. national interest. One, Senator Robert Smith of New Hampshire, wants to see Congress cut off the administration's right to spend funds to conduct this war.

On McCain's side of the debate,

support has been quite tepid. The two leading Republican candidates, Governor George W. Bush of Texas and Elizabeth Dole, waited a number of days before making any comments and then offered only lukewarm and vague support for the military effort.

After stinging criticism at his lack of leadership, George W. Bush made a second statement which one commentator suggested was an "explicit echo" of McCain's position.

What is especially interesting about this Republican debate is that it is taking place at all. Throughout the Cold War, the Republican Party was viewed as the more hawkish of the two main U.S. political groups.

Not only are one-half of the Republican candidates taking an isolationist position, but polling data shows that grassroots Republican voters are moving in that direction as well. A Newsweek poll, for example, shows that while Democrats, by a four to one margin are supportive of U.S. involvement with NATO air strikes, Republicans are evenly divided on the issue. What such numbers make clear, is that Republican candidates who put forth an isolationist message do, in fact, have a constituency within their party.

As the war continues and as Serbian atrocities mount, it will be increasingly difficult for serious candidates to publicly maintain an isolationist position. Already, the daily barrage of photos of Albanian refugees and news reports of their horrific stories have had a substantial impact on public attitudes toward the conflict. In mid-March only 27 per cent of the American people believed that Kosovo was in the U.S. national interest, 57 per cent did not. By the end of March, those numbers had changed to 39/51 per cent. Last week 47 per cent said that it was in U.S. national interest, with 42 per cent feeling that it was not.

More dramatically, as late as March 31, 57 per cent of Americans were opposed to sending U.S. ground forces to Kosovo. One week later, 53 per cent now say they would support sending ground troops.

This shift in public support is no doubt the result of the enormity of the humanitarian crisis. But even with the trend moving in the direction of support, the situation in public opinion remains quite volatile. It is not clear how the public will respond, for example to extensive U.S. casualties, or to a stalemate in which, despite all of

his losses, Milosevic continues to resist any settlement.

At this point Democrats are fairly unified behind the president's strategy. Vice President Al Gore, whose fate in 2000 is tied to the president's success in this venture, has taken on the role of tough talking spokesperson for the war effort. Gore, however, like the president, appears to have deep reservations about the advisability of sending U.S. ground troops into the battle since if the conflict is prolonged and costly, he will pay the long-term political cost.

The Republican criticisms of the war might be dismissed by some as simple partisanship, but it is more than that. There is a deep current of nationalism and isolationism that has been exposed. The internationalist current that was represented by past Republican presidents from Eisenhower to Bush is now having to fight for its position within the party.

As both the Balkan war and the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign develop, it will be important to take note not only of how the war plays out as a campaign issue between the two parties, but how the ideological issue of interventionism versus isolationism unfolds within the GOP.

Legal Notes

EU and Palestinian self-determination

By Pascal B. Karmy

THE EUROPEAN Union (EU) very recently declared (March 24) that inter alia, the Palestinians have the right to self-determination and consequently to a state. This declaration enhances in effect the Venice Declaration of 1980 of similar content.

The declaration was warmly welcomed by the Palestinians, especially by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Not surprisingly it was criticised by Netanyahu and his cohorts particularly as the EU declared that the Palestinian territories including Jerusalem are occupied territories. Netanyahu has even gone so far as to remind Europe of the Jewish Holocaust — as if all Europe was collectively responsible for it. This is the habit of certain Jews who confront Europe with the Holocaust whenever the latter does anything not to the liking of the Israelis.

One wonders how the Israeli government opposes the right of the Palestinians to self-determination while the Israelis themselves relied on the principle (apart from United Nations Resolution 181 of 1947 which envisages two states — one Palestinian and one Jewish) and established the state of Israel. One wonders in what way and how a Palestinian state will threaten Israel. (Netanyahu says) where the Palestinian state will almost be surrounded by Israel which is known for its state-of-the-art army and possesses nuclear power.

It is most unfortunate that the United States, which had first declared the principle of self-determination to the world specifically by President Woodrow Wilson after World War I, denies it to the Palestinians. The only promise which Yasser Arafat obtained from President Clinton during their last meeting was that the United States would bolster the peace process after the Israeli elections on May 17. This is not enough as the peace process should not depend on Israeli elections, and seeing as it is Israel which has frozen this process. It is submitted that the U.S. should follow in the steps of the EU and recognise the Palestinian right to self-determination.

Moreover this right is not subject to any condition and stands regardless of the Oslo accords, that is to say it is not subject to the negotiations between the PNA and Israel. Thus the declaration of the state of Palestine is not a unilateral action as alleged by the U.S. and Israel. This is not the same as Israel building more Jewish settlements and confiscating Palestinian land in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip thus preempting the pertinent

provisions of the Oslo accord regarding Jerusalem and the settlements. Those actions negatively affect the final status negotiations.

The practice of the United Nations organs has treated the principle of self-determination as a right in conformity with Articles 1, Paragraph 2 and Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations as well as Article 1 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. The latter reads as follows:

"All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." An identical Article is to be found in the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. Previously Resolution 637 A(VII) of December 16, 1952 of the General Assembly recommended inter alia, that the state members of the U.N. shall uphold the principle of self-determination of all peoples and nations. Most important is the declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples adopted by the General Assembly in 1960. The declaration regards the principles as a part of the obligations stemming from the charter of the U.N. and is not simply a recommendation but is in the form of an authoritative interpretation of the charter. The principle of self-determination has been incorporated in a number of international instruments. I submit that the United States and other governments support this principle which appears also in the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations which was adopted unanimously by the U.N. General Assembly in 1970. Moreover, the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice of 1975 confirmed the validity of the principle of self-determination in the context of international law.

In view of those legal authorities it seems to me that it is incumbent upon the United States to recognise this principle for the Palestinian people who have been struggling under dire circumstances for many years to achieve statehood. And just as the United States under President Truman immediately recognised the state of Israel as soon as it was declared in 1948, it is just and fair that the United States should likewise recognise the state of Palestine as soon as it is declared whether on May 4 or later.

The writer was an advocate in Palestine in 1944 and, for many years, legal officer at UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna.



The champions of Serbian fascism

By Omar Abbas

THE DUST having barely settled on the plight of the Bosnian Muslims, victims of Serbian fascism, a similar tragedy unravels, now of the Kosovar Muslims, also victims of Serbian "national socialism" — the communists of yesteryear have become the fascists of today, displaying their nationalist-cum-religious fervour with ferocious bloodthirst, with Slobodan Milosevic at the helm, in both tragedies. One wonders at the twisted values of some entities, who see it fit to stand in support of the Serbs, in spite of their blatant criminality, and to attempt to find pretexts and excuses to whitewash the image of the genocidal regime of Milosevic. While Bosnian Serbs went on a murdering and raping spree in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where it is estimated that 200,000 people perished mostly by systematic murders and torture, and countless women and girls were raped by Serbian human beasts, to the disgust of the world community, a few morally misguided entities unabashedly championed the Serbs.

Today, the beleaguered ethnic Albanians (Muslims) of Kosovo representing 90 per cent of the population, are the victims of the overwhelming Milosevic war-machine, and their plight has moved many nations to raise objections to Milosevic's "final solution." However, the dictator of (Yugoslavia) Serbia, instead of proving to be a humane, logical person, with genuine intent to solve the question of Kosovo in a civilised manner, took the NATO military action (resulting from his intransigence), as a pretext to escalate his repression and to further liquidate the civilians of Kosovo, by elimination, destruction of homes and villages and forced deportation of hundreds of thousands of mostly Kosovar civilians, men, women, children, old, sick or frail — this in the last year of the twentieth century.

Milosevic appears to have the conscience of a beast. He seems to be intent on proving that, and telling the international community to go to hell; after all he has the support of the federation of Russia, Greece and the ruling regime in Baghdad — who could wish for more! These same three entities that stood by him, whilst Bosnian Serbs were slaughtering every defenceless Bosnian Muslim in sight.

Greece, finds it proper to have common cause with the Serbs, their genocidal record notwithstanding, on no other ground than religious confessionality, which makes one wonder whether the Greeks know anything about the teachings of Christianity — thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not torture, thou shalt not rape, thou shalt not loot, thou shalt not grab other people's land and thou shalt not turn into a fascist after you were a communist, etc., etc.

Greece is a member of the democratic and civilised community of Europe; maybe that community should have second thoughts about admitting those who sympathise with mass-murderers into it's midst.

The Russian federation, having emerged from seven decades of atheistic totalitarianism communism seems now to have a fervour for Slavic ethnicity, religious orthodoxy, mafia gangsterism and blind tribal loyalty, hence their enthusiastic support for their Slavic co-religionists in Serbia, no matter that human blood is dripping from their elbows. It seems that the Russians, after seventy years of being in the wilderness, are in such a fuzzy state of mind, that they are finding it difficult to identify with civilised norms. However, one must not be too harsh on the Russians, give them another seventy years and they will surely get over their fuzzy-mindedness.

As for the third jewel in the crown of the devil, well, does one really wonder why the regime in Baghdad is championing Milosevic, while he slaughters Kosovar Muslims? This regime that has been treating the Iraqi people like worms for the last three decades and has effectively destroyed a country, with great economic potential for the foreseeable future, because of its foolishness and recklessness; is there any wonder that such a regime finds common cause with the tyrant of Belgrade!

Every time the U.S. is involved in a conflict, like the one in Yugoslavia now, or the ongoing conflict with Saddam Hussein's regime, voices are raised citing double-standards, vis-a-vis the Palestinian people and Israel's aggression against Palestinian territory that has been going on for five decades. Certainly the blatant U.S. bias towards the Israelis has encouraged them to flout U.N. Security Council resolutions and international conventions regarding occupied territories. Inasmuch as I sym-

pathise with that argument, I cannot accept the confusing of issues and the obscuring of tragic incidents, like the one in Kosovo, because of that argument. It must be admitted, in fairness, that the U.S. and its NATO allies are defending a beleaguered people and challenging brutal tyranny.

As for those who wish to make a big deal of the legality of the NATO military action in Yugoslavia, or raise the issue of sovereignty, they might take a cue from the feeling of the world community on that subject: the U.N. Security Council turned down Russia's motion which challenged NATO's military campaign, by twelve votes against three; and the action taken by NATO against Serbia, was decided by a unanimous vote of all nineteen member nations of that organisation, all democratically elected governments. It is not one or two nations waging a campaign on their own in the name of "national interests," but the responsible decision of nineteen nations in the face of a major human disaster. One might, on this occasion remind of the indecision that allowed the Bosnian Serbs to overrun Srebrenica, which enabled the Bosnian Serbs to cold-bloodedly massacre an estimated eight thousand Bosnian Muslim males. Is the world to wait and watch while similar atrocities are committed in Kosovo?

The same argument applies to the slogan of "sovereignty," a slogan that sounds suspect by those who raise it in the context of the human tragedy of Kosovo, which puts these parties in defence of Serbian fascism. The classic concept of the sovereignty of nation, cannot and should not prevail to protect genocidal criminals from retribution; in this modern world, that concept cannot be viable. When humanity is threatened on such a massive scale, examples of which are now manifest in Kosovo, as they were manifest in Bosnia, Algeria, Rwanda, Burundi, Iraq and Cambodia to name a few. The conscience of the world community, should rise above these outdated concepts and those slogans should never be allowed to deter action against genocide and barbarism in this modern world. If the world community needs a convention to lay down the rules for such action in the future, so be it.

The writer is a business entrepreneur and lawyer.

هنا عن الفصل

The captain of the USS Liberty, the American spy ship which was attacked by Israel during the '67 war, was buried last Friday. Below left, his crew pays tribute to him, casting doubts on the official version that what happened was a tragic accident. George Hishmeh, right, agrees, and notes how the captain's burial coincides with the anniversary of another tragedy: The Deir Yassin massacre

Ambushed crew salutes its captain

By Michael E. Ruane

ONE BY one, they approached the grave to leave a single white rose, then stood ramrod straight, gazed off from the top of the cemetery's hill and snapped a crisp salute.

Most of them were portly men, greying old sailors in baseball caps and blue jackets that read "USS Liberty... Remember... 8 June 1967." Beneath another tombstone at the bottom of the hill lay the remains of shipmates who had died that day.

Yesterday, the faithful survivors brought their long-dead comrades to Arlington National Cemetery the body of their captain — a reunion of seamen eternally bound by one of the most bloody and bizarre peacetime encounters in U.S. naval history.

Capt. William L. McGonagle won the Medal of Honour for valiantly commanding the USS Liberty when the American spy ship was attacked by Israeli aircraft and torpedo boats in the Mediterranean during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Thirty-four U.S. sailors were killed, and 171, including McGonagle, were wounded, among the crew of 300. Thirteen of the dead — including the remains of six in the mass grave at the bottom of the hill — were buried at Arlington.

The Israelis later apologised. But Liberty survivors, and some former U.S. officials, believe the attack was deliberate, staged to conceal Israel's pending seizure of the Golan Heights, which occurred shortly thereafter.

McGonagle, who died of lung cancer March 3 at the age of 73 in his Palm Springs, Calif., home, held his silence for years, torn by loyalty to the Navy and love for his crew and his ship. But even he, in recent years, came to conclude the attack was deliberate.

Yesterday, as six grey horses pulled a black caisson bearing a gold box of his cremated remains through flurries of spring blossom petals — and as four grey Navy F-14 fighters thundered overhead in

tribute — most talk was of "Captain Bill." "Captain McGonagle was an honourable man," Richard J. Brooks, 63, of Moyock, N.C., who was a 32-year-old master chief machinist's mate in the engine room on the day the Liberty was attacked, said as he stood near the grave yesterday.

"He was a gentleman, one of the best skippers the Navy ever had to command a ship, and most of all a dear friend," said Brooks, who stood wearing a USS Liberty jacket. "I keep my shipmates, my skipper and my ship in my heart every day." Ernie Gallo, 54, of Dunn Loring, a baker's son from North Philadelphia who was a 22-year-old communications technician, gestured toward McGonagle's grave and then at his buddies: "It started with him. And these guys kept us alive. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for him and these guys."

James Smith, 52, of Virginia Beach, who was a damage control worker that day, said: "I spent 25 years in the Navy. There were two men I'd follow anywhere, and he was one of them." McGonagle, born a sharecropper's son in Wichita, was a child of the Dust Bowl, who had joined the Navy to get out of poverty and the vegetable fields of Southern California. He had risen through the ranks and had assumed command of the Liberty on April 25, 1966. Originally a freighter built as a World War II "Victory" ship, the Liberty had been pulled from retirement and outfitted with millions of dollars of electronic eavesdropping gear, according to a former ship's officer, James M. Ennes Jr., who has written a book about the attack.

In December 1964, the Liberty was put to work as a spy ship. Three years later, with McGonagle now in command, it was hurried to the eastern Mediterranean, where the Arab-Israeli war had erupted.

Despite the deep concerns of McGonagle and his crew about their proximity to the war, the ship, armed only with a few 50-calibre machine guns, began a slow patrol 12 miles off Gaza.

The Liberty, code-named "Rockstar," had been denied the protection of a

destroyer by superiors who said it was "not a reasonable subject for attack," according to Ennes. But about 2 p.m., after being buzzed by Israeli scout planes, the ship suddenly was assailed by Israeli jets firing rockets and dropping napalm.

Liberty sailors were gunned down as they scrambled for cover. The machine gun crews were tossed into the air like dolls. Flaming napalm blanketed parts of the ship. Sailors radioed frantically: "Any station, this is Rockstar. We are under attack." Then, after several passes by the jets, the torpedo boats arrived. After several misses, one struck home, blasting a 40-foot-wide hole below decks and killing 25 men almost instantly. All the while, McGonagle, his right leg riddled with shrapnel, maintained command, bellowing orders — "Right full rudder! All engines flank!" — assessing the damage and trying to dodge the torpedoes.

"I saw him on the bridge during the height of the battle," Ennes recalled in an interview. He "was just running through the fire and flying shrapnel and rocket parts, and he just ignored them. He just walked along yelling orders and doing his job."

"He went onto the starboard wing of the bridge just as a napalm bomb hit," said Ennes, who was not present yesterday. "I thought he was gone. And he just walked through the flames like a fireman in an asbestos suit, trying to save his ship." Yesterday, as people hugged and reminisced, many said a priceless bond was forged that afternoon aboard the ravaged old ship.

"Something really wonderful came out of that attack," said retired petty officer Joseph C. Lentini, now with the EPA in Washington. "We got a family. I don't know a man in the group that won't hug you. I don't know a man that wouldn't lay his life down for me... It works that way with all these characters... That wouldn't have happened otherwise."

— The Washington Post

Liberty assaulted and memory insulted

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — As the ethnic cleansing continues unabated in Kosovo despite the fierce air strikes by the U.S.-led Atlantic Alliance, an American war hero was buried here last week without the U.S. government or Congress complying with his wishes to explain why his ship was attacked by Israeli forces in 1967.

Meantime, an American university professor is at present travelling across the country on a lecture tour to commemorate the 1948 slaughter at the hands of Jewish terrorists of over 100 Palestinian villagers who lived near Jerusalem in the hope of prodding American attention and wrath. Another anniversary will be marked here next week to commemorate the 1996 massacre by Israeli troops of over 100 Lebanese men, women and children, not unlike the rampages of the Serbians against the hapless Kosovars. As is the case with the Kosovars, the Palestinian and Lebanese villagers were unarmed, and the Americans had a measly four 50-calibre machineguns on their ship which presumably was sent there to monitor the communications in the Mideastern war zone after Israel attacked Egypt and invaded the Sinai Peninsula. The Deir Yassin massacre precipitated the exodus of the Palestinian people from their homeland; the Qana atrocities led to the temporary depopulation of southern Lebanon; and the Israeli assault left 34 U.S. Navy and National Security Agency personnel dead and 171 wounded. The Israelis believed the spy ship, in international waters across from the Sinai Peninsula, heard about their secret plans for the imminent occupation of the Golan Heights irrespective of a ceasefire in the making.

Capt. William L. McGonagle, the retired commander of the USS Liberty, who was given the highest military decoration for steering his crippled ship to

safety in Malta, was buried April 9 at the Arlington National Cemetery, without ever knowing officially why his ship was targeted by Israeli fighter planes and torpedo boats on June 8, 1967 — the fourth day of the June 1967 war. As a good officer, McGonagle remained tight-lipped for 30 years about the controversy but chose to go public with his demands two years ago for an explanation by the U.S. and Israeli governments. Congress was urged without any success to investigate the incident as it did when another spy ship called the Pueblo was attacked by the North Koreans two years later. A U.S. Navy Court of Inquiry limited its findings to whether the American servicemen aboard the Liberty performed well under attack. Many of the details about the incident were revealed in a book titled "Assault on the Liberty" and authored by Lt. Comdr. James Ennes, who also was seriously wounded during the Israeli attack. Many Americans, including the late Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who reviewed the details of the incident disputed the Israeli version that this was a case of mistaken identity. Former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Thomas Moorer believed that the Israelis feared the USS Liberty had discovered their secret plans to invade the Golan Heights on June 8. Israel did on June 9 after the Liberty was torpedoed. All the personnel of the USS Liberty were dispersed to different commands, reportedly with the warning that if they ever discussed or wrote about the Israeli attack on their ship, they would be court-martialed and discharged from the Navy.

Nevertheless, the crew formed the "USS Liberty Veterans Association" which remains defiant about unearthing some mysterious details about the incident on the high seas. For example, how come no U.S. assistance was offered the Liberty, and even when two U.S. Navy planes were sent out they were inexplicably turned back on direct orders from

the White House. In a recent BBC documentary, Israeli naval officials acknowledged identifying the Liberty as American and Capt. McGonagle had asserted that his ship had an American flag flying.

So why would the Israelis attack the ship of an important ally? Ennes has maintained in a recent article that three American submarines on a nearby spy mission were witnesses to the assault near El Arish, 13 miles from where the Liberty was stationed. There was also recent admissions by Israeli witnesses that about 150 Egyptian prisoners of war were executed by Israeli troops at that time, probably the reason for the attack because the Liberty had the capability to witness the executions.

Travelling across the U.S., Professor Daniel McGowan has single-handedly launched his project, Deir Yassin Remembered, which aims at raising funds for the establishment of a memorial to the 254 Palestinians who perished in the village outside Jerusalem 51 years ago. He is hoping that a memorial park or sculpture will be placed on the site of the village, which is about 1400 metres from Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Museum.

"It is a chilling fact that Deir Yassin is in the shadow of Israel's preeminent national shrine where the names of every known Jewish victim of the Germans are recorded," McGowan told the Washington Report. "Yet a few hundred feet away, the massacred civilians of Deir Yassin were cremated and buried in an unmarked grave. The irony and hypocrisy are breathtaking." A rally sponsored by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee commemorating the Deir Yassin massacre was held in front of the White House on April 9, the same day that Capt. McGonagle was buried with full military honours at Arlington, a coincidence that speaks louder than words.

Japanese premier humbled in Tokyo polls

Agence France Presse

JAPANESE PRIME Minister Keizo Obuchi "humbly" admitted his disappointment on Monday after Tokyo voters elected an outspoken nationalist and America-basher as governor of the capital.

Shintaro Ishihara, a popular author who frequently lashes the United States and offends China, swept to victory with 30.2 per cent of the vote, far ahead of his nearest rival.

"It is a reflection of the people's will towards local governments, and I would like to take it humbly," Obuchi said of the election, in which Ishihara swept aside the ruling party candidate.

Yasushi Akashi, who was backed by Obuchi's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), trailed in fourth place with just 12.5 per

cent. "There was not enough time to seek understanding from Tokyo residents on (the) good points of Mr. Akashi," Obuchi told reporters of their bluff.

"Since I myself strongly urged Mr. Akashi to run for the election, I am very disappointed by the result."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiromu Nonaka added: "Our party could not be united enough, and consequently we have caused tremendous trouble to Mr. Akashi and harmed his reputation."

The local elections held around the country were the first national test faced by the government since Obuchi came to office last July. But the premier indicated he

would stay on.

In the 44 elections involving 2,669 municipal seats, the LDP won a record low of 1,288 while the Japan Communist Party won a record high 152, a trend widely seen as showing frustration with established parties.

The morning after his victory in Tokyo, Ishihara visited the grave of his younger brother Yujiro, a popular actor who died in 1987 at the age of 52 and is credited with giving the candidate his high profile.

Ishihara told reporters "I feel sleepy" but he has set a startling agenda for his term in office.

He has promised the capital's 9.7 million voters he will fight for the return of the

Yokota U.S. airbase in western Tokyo, but vowed to pursue his campaign programme "step by step."

"The people of Tokyo and Japan feel established political parties are now worthless," he said shortly after the election, in which a high 58 per cent of voters cast ballots.

Four-yearly elections for the governorships of 12 prefectures and 44 prefectural assembly seats were held at the weekend.

But the focus was on the Tokyo prefecture, with an economy bigger than Canada's, where candidates were competing to govern with an annual budget well in excess of six trillion yen (\$46 billion).

Kunio Hatoyama, 50, who was backed

by the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, was runner up in the capital with 15.4 per cent. In third spot was political commentator Yoichi Masuzoe with 15.2 per cent.

The key issues were how to fix the debt-ridden Tokyo waterfront, welfare, and the city's debt estimated at a total of 6,628.9 billion yen (\$54 billion) as of March 31.

Ishihara, a former LDP national member of parliament, outraged Washington a decade ago with his book "A Japan That Can Say No," which described the U.S. military shield around Japan as an illusion and said U.S. criticism of Japan was racialist motivated.

He has also angered China, in 1990

describing the 1937 Nanjing massacre as a fabrication. The allied war trials said Japanese troops killed 140,000 people in Nanjing, but China claims 300,000 died.

Hong Kong's independent Chinese-language daily Ming Pao described Ishihara as "a horrible neighbour" as he was "a hawkish politician, known for his pro-Taiwan stance."

And newspapers in Japan warned his promise to "Say No" to central government bureaucrats could grind Tokyo to a halt.

"The central and local governments are different in their quality and contents," said the Yomiuri Shimbun. If Ishihara keeps saying "No," the Tokyo government won't make any progress.

The prime minister said he wanted to work with Ishihara "in areas where I can cooperate."

Jordan's WTO accession bid held up by needed reforms, business opposition

(Continued from page 1)

"In the long run industries will have to compete in the local market with products from all over the world," said Halaqah. "Such fierce competition is anticipated whether Jordan joins [the WTO] or not," he said, referring to the European Association Agreement, not yet ratified by Parliament, and the Arab Free Trade Area.

But besides amending a copyright law to make it TRIPS com-

pliant and introducing other laws, including customs, patent and trademark, Jordan remains some way from meeting other requirements set by the world body in terms of legislation and policy reform, say officials and experts. Until now, there has been little public debate of the benefits and disadvantages of joining the organisation. For the most part the general public is simply unaware of the impact such liberalisation will have on the trade regime and thus their

wallets. However, lobby groups representing both sides of the divide are forming.

Politicians, weary of another battle reminiscent of that surrounding the privatisation of state firms, may lack the political will to push ahead with accession, especially as the country grapples with negligible growth and soaring unemployment and poverty.

"Free trade is politically contentious," said an official who supports accession. "Jobs lost to foreign competition or business

closures effected by their non-compliance with new laws will be an obvious downside: the across-the-board effects of greater consumer purchasing power generated by cheaper imports, or of higher productivity brought about by increased competition, are far less evident."

"There has been very little in the way of an education process about globalisation and how we can work within this framework. There is no one championing the cause."

Yugoslav forces raid Albanian town, U.S. warns against spread of war

(Continued from page 1)

Clark called it "an uncanny accident" and said "we're all very sorry for it." But he told reporters NATO's bombing raids were winning the war against Yugoslav forces.

Meanwhile, in Oslo, the United States and Russia said they had narrowed some gaps but failed to reach agreement on how to end the fighting in Kosovo.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov could not close the diplomatic gulf opened by NATO's three-week-old air campaign but vowed to keep talking to find a political solution to the Balkan conflict.

Albright's meeting with Ivanov was the first high-level contact between the two nations since the unprecedented NATO campaign began.

Ivanov said Moscow's opposition to NATO bombing was

unchanged but the two sides had agreed to keep up contacts in a search for a political solution.

Ivanov, who did not repeat Russia's recent bitter Cold War-style condemnations of NATO bombings of Yugoslav targets, said he and Albright had made some progress.

"We have taken a step forward, perhaps not as big a step as we hoped, but a step forward nevertheless," he told reporters.

Ivanov said creating an international peacekeeping force for Kosovo was one of the most contentious issues, even though he and Albright agreed on the need to allow the refugees to return. "An international presence in whatever form requires the assent" of Belgrade, said Ivanov.

NATO air raids on the Kosovo capital Pristina overnight Monday and Tuesday caused severe damage, demolishing a bus station, a fuel dump and a factory producing plastic.

NATO warplanes also bombed and destroyed a railway bridge in southern Yugoslavia overnight Monday, only hours after an earlier raid that killed 10 people and struck a passenger train.

In Washington, the Pentagon said it may dispatch an additional 300 aircraft to Europe to beef up the air war against Yugoslavia while Britain announced plans to deploy an extra 1,800 troops to the Balkans. The extra forces will bring to 6,300 the number of British troops in the region.

A NATO humanitarian relief mission in Albania codenamed Operation Allied Harbour began to shape up with 3,000 soldiers of the 8,000-strong force already in place.

Aid agencies said around 4,800 refugees crossed into Albania at the Morina border post, bringing the total number of Kosovars to have entered Albania in the past three weeks to more than 314,000. Some

125,000 Kosovo Albanians have crossed the Macedonian border since the NATO began air strikes on Yugoslav targets on March 24. Of those, almost 8,000 have been evacuated to other countries including Germany and Turkey.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said he had evidence that ethnic Albanian women were being "systematically" raped in a Yugoslav army camp at Djakovica in southern Kosovo.

Yugoslav Vice Prime Minister Vuk Draskovic said Tuesday that the "time has come for compromise," arguing that the Western powers had renounced two demands which Belgrade found unacceptable.

He said they were no longer demanding NATO troops in Kosovo, nor that the southern Serbian province be made into a third Yugoslav republic, according to a report by the Beta news agency.

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Higher oil prices unlikely to impact crisis-hit Asia severely — analysts

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Deflation at home will minimise the impact of higher oil prices on crisis-hit Asian economies, analysts have said.

"The inflationary impact of the higher oil prices in Asia will be less severe than in the past, given substantial domestic deflationary pressures," said Chan Chia Lin of ABN Amro's Asian Economic Research unit in Singapore.

A lingering depression in consumer demand in the region, along with a moderation of economic growth, will cushion any negative impact of higher crude prices, Chan said, despite the rise in oil prices by more than 30 per cent in the last few weeks.

In the world's second largest economy, Japan, which has been mired in a recession for almost a decade, "oil distributors see less demand as users in the heavy machinery industry are burdened with excess capacity," said Keiko Sasaki, analyst at ING Barings in Tokyo.

Huge current account sur-

pluses chalked up by regional economies would also absorb the shock of higher oil prices on countries' balance of payments, analysts said.

If the benchmark Brent crude price averages \$13 to \$14 per barrel in 1999, inflation in the region is expected to be "at worst" half a percent to seven-tenths of a percent higher than original estimates, ABN Amro said.

Of the hardest hit Asian crisis economies that export oil, Indonesia, an OPEC member, and Malaysia, a non-member of the Vienna-based body, are expected to benefit from the higher crude prices following the production cuts. Indonesia has pledged to cut oil exports by seven per cent, although Malaysia is not obliged to reduce production, ABN Amro said, noting that Malaysia has attempted to offset the impact of lower oil prices by increasing the volume of its oil exports.

But rising oil prices are a major source of concern for South Korea, which entirely relies on imports for its energy source.

If oil prices rise to more than \$13 per barrel, South Korea's current account would be affected by more than \$3 billion.

"If the crude oil prices rise by a dollar, domestic oil prices will go up eight to 10 per cent," an official of S.K. Energy Sales Co. in Seoul said.

But analysts at ING Barings said the higher oil prices would have minimal impact on two of Asia's largest economies, Japan and China.

"As the Japanese economy is in slump, their earnings are bad and they are reducing production. As for crude oil, they are unlikely to buy at high prices," said Sasaki.

For China, a net importer, any higher costs in oil prices would be offset by the boost its petrochemical industry would get, as the current price advantage of imported downstream products disappears, said Alexandra Contro, a sector analyst with ING Barings in Shanghai.

International price rises "won't have an impact because their own crude prices never came down to match international prices,"

she said.

China's domestic oil output satisfies 90 per cent of its demand, but the government has fixed prices at artificially high levels to support its relatively inefficient producers, she noted.

China imported 35.5 million tonnes of crude oil in 1997, up 57 per cent year on year.

India, another Asian economy which has managed to weather the regional crisis, annually imports about 90 million tonnes of petroleum crude and other products, but analysts said product imports would cease from October due to a huge addition in domestic refining capacity.

Prateek Agarwal, analyst at investment bank SBI Capital Markets Ltd. in Bombay, said it was unsure how long OPEC could sustain the high prices.

"It is yet unclear if OPEC will cheat on the production cuts. Traditionally they have and there seems no reason why we should not have a similar situation now," he said.

U.S. balances need for open markets, cry for protectionism

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Faced with a growing trade deficit, President Bill Clinton's administration is struggling to balance a commitment to open markets with calls to punish unfair trade.

Nowhere is the administration's dilemma more apparent than in the controversy over hot-rolled steel imports, which the U.S. steel industry says are cheaply and unfairly priced and therefore imperil its very existence.

Bowing to pressure from both steel firms and organised labour, the House of Representatives recently backed a bill that would impose quotas on steel imports — precisely the sort of barrier to free trade the United States has denounced in Japan, China and Europe.

Not surprisingly, Clinton's advisers have warned Congress the president will veto the measure.

But that is a move the administration would be extremely reluctant to make, as it is certain to ignite the wrath of organised labour and complicate Vice President Al Gore's

presidential campaign.

Already, the United Steelworkers of America union has charged the Clinton-Gore administration with "turning its back on American steel workers and steel producers."

The U.S. Commerce Department readily agrees with the industry that steel imports from Japan, Brazil and Russia have been "dumped" on the U.S. market at prices well below cost of production.

But the department's response was to activate U.S. legislation allowing the imposition of punitive duties on goods that enter the country at "dumping" prices.

Tariffs were announced against Japan and Brazil while a deal was struck with Russia to cut imports.

Nevertheless, the U.S. industry and the unions were not satisfied and are now pressing for quotas.

From the European Union (EU), meanwhile, have come howls of protest from government and business leaders following the announcement that Washington would slap sanctions \$520 million worth of EU

imports.

The United States justified the move, denounced in Europe as a unilateral and illegal obstacle to trade, on grounds the EU had failed to comply with a WTO ruling that its banana import practices were discriminatory.

This is not protectionism, argues the U.S. administration. It is the legitimate enforcement of U.S. and global trade rules.

"The administration wants to keep markets open and keep free trade," said Lawrence Chimerine, chief economist at Economic Strategy Institute here.

"But the unfairness of the situation is pushing people toward a protectionist stance. The administration is looking for the middle ground, but the problem is that the only leverage it has to force other markets to open is access to our markets," he added.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin frets that the soaring trade gap and the perception that foreigners are taking advantage of the United States have intensified protectionist sentiment, a conviction evident in poll after

poll, according to Chimerine.

"There are fewer and fainter voices for maintaining open markets," Rubin said in a speech here.

With the U.S. economy growing so much faster than just about everywhere else in the world, and as imports pour into the United States, "protectionism is gaining a head here," he said.

"If we begin to indicate that we are restricting access to our markets, when we are doing so well," he warned, "that will reinforce protectionism in other countries, and we could get into a situation in which access to markets around the world becomes more restrictive, with tremendous negative consequences for us."

But in the same breath, he felt obliged to add that "obviously, if there are unfair trade practices abroad, that is something we need to deal with and the president has said he is fully committed to vigorous implementation of our trade laws."

The strength of domestic protectionist sentiment is nonetheless open to question.

Excellent Job Opportunity
for Jordanian, with a University Degree, at least 4 years Business Experience, and Proficiency in Spoken and Written English

The Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team in Amman welcomes applications from Jordanian business consultants who wish to join the team. Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre is currently implementing the Private Sector Development Programme financed by the European Commission. The Business Support Service Component provides tailored and integrated business support to private Jordanian enterprises aiming at improving their performance and competitiveness.

The successful candidate must:

- Have an advanced degree in Business Administration, Economics, Industrial Engineering or related disciplines.
- Have at least four years' of business experience in marketing, production, finance, communications or consulting.
- Be familiar with methods and practices related to business development - technology, productivity, and financial improvement.
- Convincingly demonstrate ability to evaluate consultancy services and match Jordanian needs with European expertise.
- Demonstrate excellent communications' skills and personal integrity.
- Be able to work independently.
- Be above average computer and Internet literate.
- Be proficient in spoken and written English.
- Be willing and able to become a fully committed member of the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team consisting of three resident Europeans and four Jordanians.

• Work and travel with European and Jordanian consulting teams assigned to assist individual Jordanian enterprises.

The duration of the employment is 1 year with good prospects of extension. Please send your expression of interest with details about your background and personal co-ordinates to the project manager of the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre at e-mail address:

m.ronsholt@hotmail.com
no later than April 29, 1999. Please save attachment as rich text format.

Or mail it to Project Manager M. Ronsholt, P.O. Box 925956, Amman-11194
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Excellent Business Consulting Opportunities for Jordanian Students and Recent Graduates in Business Administration

Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre is currently implementing the Private Sector Development Programme financed by the European Commission. The Business Support Service Component provides tailored and integrated business support to private Jordanian enterprises aiming at improving their performance and competitiveness.

Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre invites MBA students and young MBA graduates to express interest in participating in the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre's Business Support Service Programme in Jordan as Business Consultant Trainees.

Successful applicants will be seconded to European Consultants selected by the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre to provide technical assistance to Jordanian Private Enterprises.

The assignments will be of 10-15 days duration each and will be remunerated by the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Team.

Proficiency in spoken and written English is required.

Please send your expression of interest with details about your background and personal co-ordinates to the project manager of the Euro-Jordanian Business Service Centre at e-mail address:

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Thank you for reading this announcement.

Exchange Rates		Tuesday, 13-04-99		ACCESS 4645888					
		UNITED STATES DOLLAR	EURO	SWITZERLAND FRANC	NETHERLANDS GILDER				
JORDAN DINAAR	1.0000	0.1888	0.1928	1.8780	1.5779	0.1945	2.3122	0.2074	0.7080
SAUDI RIYAL	5.2872	1.0000	1.0211	9.8480	8.9475	1.0300	12.2482	1.0884	3.7504
UAE DIRHAM	1.5778	0.9784	1.0000	9.7427	8.7422	1.0088	11.9954	1.1057	3.8730
BAHRAIN DIBR	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9999	0.1035	1.2312	0.1174	0.3710
OMAN RIAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9999	0.1035	1.2312	0.1174	0.3710
QATAR RIAL	1.5778	0.9784	1.0000	9.7427	8.7422	1.0088	11.9954	1.1057	3.8730
KUWAIT DIBR	0.4325	0.0816	0.0834	0.8122	0.8122	0.0841	1.0000	0.0893	0.3082
LIBYAN DINAR	4.8227	0.9104	0.9296	9.0570	8.0565	0.9378	11.1512	1.0000	3.4145
LEBANON LIRA	21.2147	4.0048	4.0693	39.8408	30.8387	4.1252	49.0529	4.3688	15.0200
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2888	0.2723	2.8525	2.6524	0.2746	3.2688	0.2929	1.0000
BRITISH STERLING	0.8748	0.1651	0.1688	1.6424	1.6424	0.1622	0.1931	0.1931	0.6500
GERMAN MARK	3.3684	0.4525	0.4528	4.5000	4.5000	0.4571	5.5108	0.5301	1.8589
NETHERLANDS GILDER	2.0990	0.3961	0.4044	4.5401	3.9398	0.4080	4.8511	0.4390	1.4854
FRANCE FRANC	8.5732	0.1814	0.1825	15.1003	16.0894	1.6871	18.8230	1.7730	6.0983
JAPAN YEN	1.7031	0.3215	0.3283	3.1984	3.1982	0.3312	3.9379	0.3931	1.2088
HOLLAND GILDER	2.8802	0.5347	0.5592	5.4090	5.4087	0.5601	6.5987	0.5527	2.0392
SWEDEN KRONA	11.7171	2.2120	2.2566	22.0045	22.0043	2.2784	27.0924	2.4266	8.2597
ITALY LIRA	25.3073	4.7775	4.8782	47.5288	47.5283	4.9211	58.6160	5.2475	17.9175
BELGIUM FRANC	52.7600	9.8536	10.1834	99.0555	99.0133	10.2555	121.9138	10.9238	37.3000
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2154	0.4168	0.4276	4.1850	4.1858	0.4314	5.1293	0.4600	1.5706
GREEK DRACHMA	4.2363	0.7957	0.8156	7.9557	7.9563	0.8238	9.7952	0.8784	2.9593
CYPRUS POUND	0.7486	0.1413	0.1443	1.4058	1.4058	0.1458	1.7308	0.1522	0.5300
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.9839	3.3950	3.4955	33.7375	33.7371	3.4970	41.5826	3.2990	12.7328
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1073	0.3978	0.4062	3.9576	3.9573	0.4098	4.8728	0.4770	1.6252
BURRO	1.5060	0.2465	0.2517	2.4526	2.4525	0.2540	3.0197	0.2708	0.9246

		UNITED STATES DOLLAR	EURO	SWITZERLAND FRANC	NETHERLANDS GILDER				
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.6150	0.5525	0.6732	0.1648	0.6293	0.4904	5.5511	1.0815
QATAR RIAL	0.6192	1.0000	0.3421	0.4189	0.1020	0.5135	0.3036	3.4888	0.6987
GERMAN MARK	1.8098	2.9320	1.0000	1.2185	0.2882	1.5010	0.8876	10.112	1.9574
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.4854	2.3989	0.8207	1.0000	0.2447	1.2319	0.7284	8.2602	1.6085
FRANCE FRANC	0.6088	0.9027	0.3537	4.0663	1.0000	3.9538	2.9765	33.8780	6.8545
JAPAN YEN	120.3830	184.7367	68.6225	81.7783	19.3559	100.070	140.1310	670.336	130.4077
HOLLAND GILDER	2.0982	3.9223	1.1267	1.3728	0.3360	1.8912	1.0000	11.3610	2.2054
SWEDEN KRONA	8.2957	13.9378	4.5335	5.5848	1.3657	6.8756	4.0681	45.2992	9.9718
ITALY LIRA	17.9175	28.5389	9.6996	12.0625	2.9519	14.8565	8.7886	1.0000	8.9779
BELGIUM FRANC	37.3000	50.2880	20.6254	25.1313	6.5101	30.9587	18.3062	206.3428	40.3724
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.5708	2.5385	0.8978	1.0574	0.2509	1.9325	0.7072	8.7657	1.9686
GREEK DRACHMA	2.9593	4.8525	1.6424	1.6424	0.1622	1.4703	1.4703	17.7386	3.8545
CYPRUS POUND	0.5300	0.8560	0.3268	0.3589	0.0873	0.4386	0.2599	2.9500	0.5722
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	12.7328	20.9531	7.0350	8.5518	2.0977	10.5586	6.2438	71.0620	13.7703
CANADA DOLLAR	1.4920	2.4086	0.8244	1.0044	0.2456	1.2374	0.7317	8.3270	1.6138
BURRO	0.9248	1.4933	0.5109	0.6225	0.1523	0.7586	0.4334	5.1805	1.0000

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Awajan unveils wide-ranging mismanagement at phosphate company

**** A REPORT** prepared by a technical committee and submitted by Lower House Deputy Walid Awajan to the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm reveals that large amounts of materials worth around JD7.8 million were stolen from the Caterpillar warehouse belonging to the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company during four days between the end of December 1998 and Jan. 3/1999.

The deputy also presented to the newspaper a number of official documents showing many cases of financial and administrative corruption and fraud at the phosphate company. Some of the documents indicate that the authorities were withdrawn from a number of the company's responsible personnel without any justification and that the role of those persons was marginalised. Furthermore, the company's raw materials were taken to the warehouses of some persons without bringing them to the main warehouses of the company as the procedures require.

"The reports emphasise in this regard that there is no investigation or accountability of any kind in the misconduct of the groups who are close to some company officials," the daily said. "Fraud involving the company's funds is sometimes blamed on low-level workers who are taken for investigation when they have no relation to the issue."

Awajan said that he had learned from reliable source at the phosphate company that a very costly contract was renewed with a firm to monitor and study water sources at three mines despite a recommendation from the engineer in charge that such a task was not needed.

The deputy listed various cases of robberies which each time was registered against an unknown person and mentioned a case where an expensive purchase order was carried out although it was not according to specification.

"All these practices are made by the company's high level staff without the knowledge of the responsible authorities," concluded the report which stressed that these practices are behind the increasing losses of the company.

The daily went further to reveal that a government committee formed to investigate the company's affairs has identified clear imbalances in the main financial, production, administrative and marketing activities of the company. The committee said quick remedial action was necessary to ensure the continuity of the company and the achievement of its targets.

Awajan questioned the decline in production between 1993 and 1996 despite higher investments and workforce. He expressed his astonishment over the work of contractors who have become responsible for 80 per cent of the company's production leaving only 20 per cent or even less to be handled by the company itself. "This means that the company's policy is now dependent on the contractors who employ less than 1,000 workers and whose combined equipment is worth less than one excavator," the deputy said noting that the phosphate company has six excavators and that it should be producing 40 million cubic metres annually. "What about all this equipment and how can the work of thousands of workers and technicians be maintained when the phosphate company is scrapping its role as a mining company?"

Awajan concluded by pointing out that the fines imposed on the company for delaying vessels at the port of Aqaba have exceeded JD2 million because there was no phosphate to ship. In addition, the costs of travel and trips have also exceeded JD1 million as well as the daily allowances which are calculated without any legal base and siphon much of the company's funds (Al Arab Al Yawm).

'Peace Canal' promises abundant harvests for Egypt's Sinai

ISMAILIYA, Egypt (AFP) — Centuries of rich black soil deposited on the former bed of the River Nile carry the promise of abundant harvests for Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, where an ambitious scheme to water the desert is well

under way. The much fought-over Sinai — the scene of three Egyptian-Israeli wars, in 1956, 1967 and 1973 — has until now been valued for its strategic rather than its agricultural importance.

But that is now changing. Under a project first announced 20 years ago, water from Nile tributaries has started flowing through the Peace Canal to the northern Sinai desert on either side of the Suez Canal.

The most striking — and expensive — feature of the project is the one kilometre long quadruple tunnel passing under the Suez Canal itself. It will account for one third of the total cost of \$2 billion.

Until recently, the region's only product was salt, so another important challenge facing the engineers was the excessive salinity of the ground. One of the first steps they had to take was to drain the soil and erect dykes to hold back brackish water.

They developed a system for "washing" the soil in freshwater in order to remove the salt. Even so, it took two years before the land could be deemed

sufficiently salt free for agricultural use.

When complete, the canal will be 260 kilometres long, more than two-thirds of it on the eastern side of the Suez Canal. More than half of the water will be recycled and will go to irrigate 260,000 hectares (620,000 acres) of land.

Dozens of plots on the western side have already been staked out and some of the initial 88,000 hectares (220,000 acres) there have already been planted with fruit and vegetables. The remaining acreage on the eastern side should be ready for planting in 2004.

About one third of the finance for the project is coming from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. One stretch has been named the Sheikh Jaber Canal, after Kuwaiti Emir Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Egypt's late president Anwar Sadat originally announced plans to build the canal after he

signed a peace treaty with Israel 20 years ago. In those heady days he even suggested that water could be supplied to the Jewish state and the Palestinian territories.

But he quickly gave up the idea and Egyptian government officials have repeatedly said since then that they will not give a single drop of water to Israel or any one else.

The Peace Canal is one of two major irrigation projects in Egypt, by which the government hopes to bring 25 per cent of the area of the country into agricultural use. Only six per cent is currently under cultivation.

The second project is the Toshka scheme, in the southern desert, which is to use water from Lake Nasser — the lake formed by the Aswan Dam — to create 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) of farmland.

A.S.E TRADE ACCESS 4646868			
Tuesday, 13-04-99			
Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
BANKS			
ARAB BK	209,000	207,000	-0.96%
INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK	1,380	1,370	-1.44%
THE HOUSING BK	2,700	2,710	+0.37%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1,600	1,600	-1.23%
JO. GULF BK	1,600	1,600	0.00%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1,600	1,600	0.00%
JO. INVS. & FIN. BK	1,310	1,310	0.00%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0,510	0,510	0.00%
BANKS INDEX	270,600	POINT	-0.74%
SERVICES			
ELECTRIC POWER	1,640	1,630	-0.61%
IRIBD ELECTRICITY	1,960	1,970	+0.51%
JO. INT'L TRADING CENT	0,270	0,270	0.00%
AL-RAT	7,500	7,500	0.00%
AL-ZARQA FOR EDU	0,950	0,950	-2.11%
ARAB INT'L FOR INVS. & EDU	1,920	1,920	0.00%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1,100	1,110	+0.91%
SERVICES INDEX	111,900	POINT	-0.14%
INDUSTRY			
CEMENT	3,550	3,620	+1.97%
PHOSPHATE	2,400	2,370	-1.25%
ARAB POTASH	4,350	4,360	+0.00%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10,850	10,750	-0.92%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2,950	2,940	-0.34%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1,320	1,310	-0.76%
JO. PIPES	0,980	0,940	-2.08%
DAR AL DAWA	6,120	6,090	-0.49%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0,580	0,580	-1.67%
JO. STEEL	1,000	0,990	-1.00%
ARAB ALUMINIUM	1,780	1,780	0.00%
CHLORINE	1,200	1,170	-2.50%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0,380	0,380	0.00%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0,210	0,210	0.00%
ROCKWOOL	0,280	0,280	0.00%
NITL CABLE	0,510	0,500	-1.96%
KAWTHER	0,590	0,590	-1.69%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0,580	0,580	0.00%
FOOD FACTORIES	1,000	1,000	0.00%
IND. RESOURCES	0,820	0,810	-1.22%
NEW CAPLES	0,810	0,840	+3.70%
INDUSTRY INDEX	97,000	POINT	+0.10%
PARALLEL			
EXPORT BK 752	0,920	0,920	0.00%
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0,480	0,470	-2.17%
JO. INT'L INS	0,920	0,970	+5.43%
UNION INVS. CORP	0,810	0,820	+1.23%
ARAB FINANCIAL INVS	0,480	0,470	-2.08%
AL - EKSA	0,850	0,810	-4.71%
ADVANCED PHAR	0,500	0,520	+4.00%
AMMAN INS	0,810	0,810	0.00%
AL DAWLAH	0,680	0,680	0.00%
ARAB INVESTORS	1,080	1,080	-0.92%
ARAB INT'L TRADE	0,180	0,180	0.00%
OPTICAL & AUDIAL	0,330	0,330	0.00%
CENTURY	1,150	1,150	0.00%
NAMICO	0,170	0,160	-5.88%
MIDDLE EAST PHAR	0,590	0,580	-1.69%
UNION TOBACCO	3,980	3,760	-5.53%
AL-RAT	0,600	0,590	-1.67%
UNITED ENG. IND	0,200	0,200	0.00%
GRAND INDEX	175.78	POINT	-0.47%

Kvaerner to quit shipbuilding, axe 25,000 jobs

OSLO (AFP) — The British-Norwegian group Kvaerner said Tuesday it was to quit shipbuilding and other loss-making businesses and axe 25,000 jobs, a third of the group's total staff.

The move is aimed at enabling the company to concentrate both managerial and financial resources on fewer, more focused and less capital intensive areas of activity, creating a group that is "significantly smaller and much leaner, but infinitely stronger," Kjell Almskog, the chief executive officer, said.

Following a year of heavy losses and negative business development, the diversified Kvaerner group announced its new strategy Tuesday, including disposal of all loss-making business to regain profitability.

The group is currently engaged in discussions on a new structure, and is aiming to cut costs by one billion kroner, it said.

Today Kvaerner covers engineering, off-shore

work, oil platforms and shipyards.

Kvaerner said it planned to make provisions of up to two billion Norwegian kroner (\$260 million, 234 million euros) in the first quarter for a possible exit loss.

Once the restructuring is completed, Kvaerner would focus on building and engineering as its core activities. The scaled-down group is expected to have a revenue of 55 billion kroner and 55,000 employees.

"We have set ourselves the objective of showing an ordinary profit in the range of 500 million to one billion kroner at the end of 2000," Almskog said.

The group is also aiming for a net reduction in debt of seven billion kroner and a return on capital of at least 15 per cent in the same time period, he added.

The decision to get out of shipbuilding was based on the belief that the business would be a drain on Kvaerner's profitability

in the foreseeable future and in consideration of the fact there is a lack of natural synergies with other core businesses.

Other activities that are expected to be sold or closed in 1999 are metal equipment, Kvaerner Energy, and all or parts of the groups' engineering businesses in France and south East Asia.

The disposal of non-core assets would raise a total of 3.5 billion kroner, the group said.

In 1998, Kvaerner fell into a net loss of 1.66 billion kroner from a profit of 1.229 billion kroner in 1997. Operating profits slumped by 48 per cent to 925 million kroner.

"The year was marked by decline on the main markets, great pressure on the share price and a change of management and of priorities," Almskog said when presenting the results in February.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Chores and errands may keep you from travelling far, but don't despair. If you get them checked off your list, you'll have more peace of mind when you do get away. Meanwhile, let friends know what you need. You might be able to work a trade or get something you want for free.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The money is not the issue really, nor is the love. You have enough of both. The question is, how are you going to allocate it? Well, here's a clue. The more you give, the more you'll get. Just keep that money and love in circulation, and there will be plenty for all.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You're wonderful, of course, but if it weren't for your friends, you'd be nowhere. Make sure they understand today how much you appreciate what they've done for you. They may pretend not to listen, but that's a thin facade. Actually, they love the attention. They thrive on it.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) A loved one may feel compelled to confess today. This is sometimes interesting, but sometimes tedious. If you don't have time for long stories, you may simply have to say so. Offer to set up an appointment for a time when you do, like somewhere around next November.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) You're a pretty popular person today. You get lots of invitations, so how will you know which to choose? A party with an in-group could leave a loved one out in the cold. Choose an activity you can share, instead, and your day will be much more successful.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) Looks like a woman may tell you how to live your life. Instead of simply ignoring what she says, listen for helpful hints. You might use one of them to increase your income, in a way different than she imagines. Besides, it'll make the conversation more interesting.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A drive will be pleasant today, especially with someone you love. But don't get so lost in romance that you forget practical things. There's an errand that needs to be run, or something you need at the store. So write up a list for yourself, right there on the palm of your hand.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You may have been feeling under pressure for the past few days, and it could be starting to get on your nerves. There's a fat free remedy that could work for this condition, if you promise not to spend too much. Go shopping for something nice at your very favourite store — something for you, that is. It's time.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're in for a fascinating conversation today. It shouldn't be hard to find. Just accept an attractive person's challenge. The mental exercise will be good for you, even if you have to concede a point or two. You'll get stronger just by stretching those old concepts. You might even shed a few preconceived notions in the process.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Even though this is your day of rest, it looks like there's a little paperwork to be done. If you can get your space organised, it might even be enjoyable. Have that be your first assignment. You'll be amazed at how good you feel after this job is finished.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 18) Should you go out and play with your friends or stay home with somebody you love? It's a delicious dilemma to find yourself in, and maybe you won't have to choose. In a situation like this, timing is important, and today, the latter should come earlier and the former should come later, for best results.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) You may be pulled in two different directions today. There's some sort of interesting activity you'd like to learn more about, but you also want to stay home with the ones you love. Romance should be your top priority. If there's still time for the other activity later, fine. If not, you won't even miss it.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

More than 80,000 people chase 3,000 postal jobs

PARIS (AFP) — More than 80,000 people have applied for just 3,000 post office jobs, or 25 candidates per job, reflecting France's "severe" unemployment problem, the post office union CGT-PTT has said.

The number of applicants for an entry test to be held on May 2 is almost double the 42,000 who applied during the last such exercise in March last year.

The union said that the post office system, the country's second-largest employer after the state with 306,000 employees, should triple the number of jobs available to fulfil "the willingness, the hope of tens of thousands of unemployed to acquire a stable job."

There were 2.9 million people out of work in France at the end of February, or 11.5 per cent of the available workforce.

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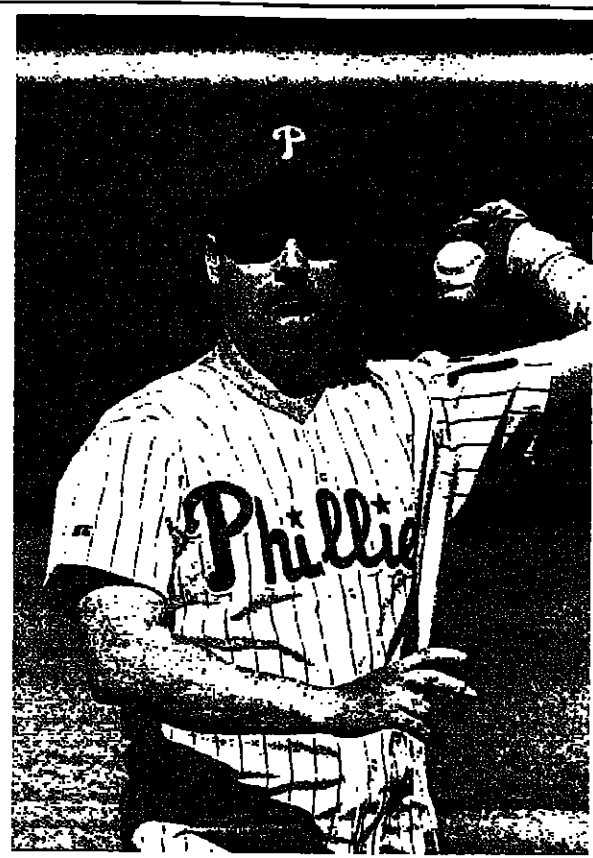
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At the home opener for the Philadelphia Phillies, Matthew Scott, 37, the nation's first hand transplant recipient throws out the ceremonial first pitch with his new hand, in Philadelphia. Scott, who is a resident of Absecon, New Jersey, received the transplant in January at the Jewish Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Larsson signs new deal with Celtic

GLASGOW (AFP) — Swedish striker Henrik Larsson on Tuesday signed a new four-year contract with Scottish Premiership champions Celtic. Larsson, the leading scorer in Scotland this season with 37 goals, has been a revelation since his arrival at the Glasgow club two years ago in a £600,000 deal from Dutch club Feyenoord.

Villa to expand stadium capacity

BIRMINGHAM (AFP) — English Premiership side Aston Villa on Tuesday announced plans to expand Villa Park's capacity to more than 50,000 seats. The proposals, including a new shopping, hotel and industrial complex, would see the present 39,372 capacity rise by 11,000. An Aston Villa spokesman said: "The benefits of the football club's plans for the region's economy are well-known, as is the added prestige of attracting international games to the city." Villa Park is the venue for this season's European Cup Winners' Cup final.

Diarte put in charge of Salamanca

SALAMANCA (AFP) — Carlos Diarte of Paraguay was named Tuesday as the new coach of struggling Spanish first division side Salamanca. Diarte takes over from Iosu Ortuondo, who parted company with the club on Sunday. A 2-1 loss against Racing Santander on Sunday left Salamanca in bottom spot on the table. "I have no illusions," Diarte said. "There is probably neither the money or the time to save this team." The 45-year-old Diarte has played in Spain for Zaragoza, Salamanca, Valencia and Real Betis. He scored 85 goals in 143 league appearances. He coached Real Madrid's reserve team in 1996-97.

Zonta released from hospital

SAO PAULO (AFP) — Brazilian driver Ricardo Zonta was released from hospital on Monday after two days of treatment on a foot injury that could see him miss the next three Formula One Grands Prix. Zonta damaged tendons in his foot in Saturday's crash during final practice for Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix. The 23-year-old, who is driving in his first season of Formula One for debutant team BAR, underwent micro-surgery to repair tendons damaged when he sustained a deep cut and fracture to his left foot in the accident — which left his car wrecked.

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France takes measures to fight football violence

PARIS (AFP) — French Sport Minister Marie-George Buffet on Monday announced measures to fight a wave of youth violence, which has been sweeping soccer stadiums in suburbs north of the capital.

The latest incident took place in Cergy, north of Paris, on Sunday when shots were fired in the dressing room following a match between under-17 players.

Following a meeting between various government ministers, a series of measures which are to come into effect from September were announced here.

Social workers and mediation experts with specific training in youth violence will be drafted in along with 2,000 part-time police officers — to be recruited from the ranks of unemployed young footballers. A sports officer will be assigned to each region and the national police, in conjunction with local football authorities, will organise special measures before matches in areas regarded as at risk. Paris' northern suburbs have a high proportion of migrants and many are regarded as economically deprived.

Chang wins match point battle to survive at Japan Open

TOKYO (AFP) — Michael Chang staved off one match point before winning two of the three tie-breakers to beat Michael Hill of Australia in the first round of the Japan Open tennis here on Tuesday.

The 1989 French Open champion was 4-5 and 30-40 down in the 10th game of the final set on Hill's serve before getting a break which inspired him to a 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4) victory.

"I feel pretty fortunate to win this match. I should have lost today's match," said Chang, the ninth seed, whose world ranking has plummeted to 40th after an injury-plagued year.

"Michael was serving for each of the three sets and on the match point. I feel pretty fortunate to still be in the tournament. In a sense, I kind of got a second chance in this tournament," said Chang.

On the match point, Chang hit a deep backhand return to force Hill into a forehand error to make it 40-all and Hill made another two errors to let Chang tie at 5-5.

Hill was obviously disappointed. He dropped his racket and kicked a brewery company advertising board at the court side, while Chang stayed calm



Michael Chang

at the centre court of the Ariake Coliseum.

When Chang broke Hill's serve in the final set tie-breaker to lead 4-2, Hill let out a gigantic scream, knowing his

hopes were fading.

Chang took a commanding 6-3 lead and, although missing his first match point with a backhand error, made no mistake with his second attempt

on Hill's serve to finish off the two-hour 50-minute match.

Chang admitted he was still far away from his best form, which made him World No. 2 in

September 1996.

"I think Michael (Hill) is actually a good all-court player. He serves very well to come in and go for volleys, and he's got a pretty dangerous forehand," Chang said.

Doubles specialist Mark Woodforde of Australia, 11th seed, fell victim at the hands of American Michael Sell 6-7 (7/9), 6-2, 3-6, but Gianluca Pozzi and Sjeng Schalken safely went through with two-set wins.

Pozzi, 14th seed from Italy, breezed past Rogier Wassen of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-3, while Schalken, 12th seed from the Netherlands, outlasted Wayne Black of Zimbabwe 6-4, 6-1.

Germany's Bernd Karbacher and Lars Burgsmuller, Americans Paul Goldstein and Cecil Mamiit, Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic, John van Lottum of the Netherlands and Japan's Hideki Kaneko advanced to the second round.

In the women's event, sixth seed Meghann Shaughnessy bowed to fellow American Meilen Tu 3-6, 5-7, while Kerry-Anne Guse outplayed Laurence Andreu of France 6-4, 6-3.

Liverpool halt Leeds winning streak at seven

LONDON (AFP) — Liverpool held Leeds United to a 0-0 English Premiership draw at Elland Road on Monday night — halting Leeds' run of seven straight league victories.

While Liverpool were delighted with the point against in-form Leeds, they lost England striker Michael Owen after just 21 minutes when he limped off with a hamstring problem.

The injury will almost certainly rule him out of England's friendly in Budapest against Hungary in a fortnight and could have even more long-term effects.

Owen missed England's last game against Poland with a similar injury.

It was the last thing Liverpool needed after a nightmare few days that ended with Owen's strike partner Robbie Fowler banned by the Football Association for six matches.

Owen was clearly in trouble after failing to reach a through ball from Steve McManaman, eventually lying sprawled on his back for a minute before help arrived.

Owen then gingerly limped to the

touchline, and after receiving a brief massage to his right hamstring, shook his head in disappointment before calling it a night.

The match as a whole failed to live up to its billing.

The Reds were looking for some semblance of respectability after a recent run of just one win in their last six matches and they earned it against a Leeds team who were looking for an eighth straight win that would have set a new club record.

But that, and their hopes of their first double over Liverpool for 27 years, foundered in and around the opposition penalty area.

For once, the normally incisive killer pass was missing as the Reds defence stood firm, leaving goalkeeper David James relatively untroubled in a game in which he could have been expected to have seen more of the action.

Leeds had the better opportunities towards the end of the first period as Lee Bowyer let fly with a 25-metre shot which took an awkward bobble in front of James, who just managed to

hold onto the ball.

Australian international Harry Kewell then twice teed up Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink in the space of two minutes, the first of which he looked odds-on to score.

Kewell's deep cross to the far post evaded James, leaving the Dutchman a side-foot shot from only yards out, but Dominic Matteo produced a goal-denying block on the line.

Hasselbaink then pulled the trigger on one of his trademark powerful drives, but was just inches off-target as Liverpool breathed again.

Fowler went close early in the second for Liverpool as a first-time drive was fired straight at Nigel Martyn, while a minute later an audaciously-attempted bicycle-kick was blocked by Ian Harte.

Despite Leeds being unbeaten in the league since February 6, dropping two points will damage their chances of European Champions' League football for next season.

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NBA

Boston	103	Cleveland	89
Indiana	109	Toronto	99
Charlotte	92	Detroit	86
Houston	95	Minnesota	90
San Antonio	94	Phoenix	77
Utah	98	Vancouver	80
Golden State	104	Denver	96

English Premiership

Leeds United	0	Liverpool	0
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National League

NY Mets	8	Florida	1
Cincinnati	7	Chicago Cubs	2
San Diego	8	Colorado	5
Atlanta	8	Philadelphia	6
Arizona	12	Los Angeles	6

American League

Cleveland	5	Kansas City	2
Minnesota	1	Detroit	0
Anaheim	13	Texas	5
Toronto	7	Tampa Bay	1
Seattle	6	Oakland	3

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Israel closes another Palestinian office in Arab east Jerusalem

Arafat advisor breaches agreement by 'entering his office'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli police closed another Palestinian office in Arab east Jerusalem on Tuesday, accusing the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) of using the site for official business in violation of past agreements.

Agents of the police "minority affairs unit" posted a closure order on the door of the office of Ibrahim Qandalaft, PNA President Yasser Arafat's advisor for Christian affairs.

The right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu initially ordered Qandalaft's office and two other alleged PNA branches in east Jerusalem closed at the start

of the month.

The decision was designed to assert Israeli sovereignty over east Jerusalem, where Palestinians hope to establish the capital of a future state.

But after the Palestinians lodged an appeal with Israel's supreme court, the government agreed to let Qandalaft's office and the local outlet of the official Palestinian news agency WAFA continue operating on condition they do not act "on behalf of the Palestinian Authority."

The third office, a centre run by a prisoners' support group, was closed last week.

On Tuesday the Israelis charged that Qandalaft had violated the compromise

agreement by entering his office.

"The agreement was that nobody representing the Palestinian Authority, including Qandalaft, should enter the office," said police spokeswoman Linda Menubin.

"He opened the office and went inside and we see this as a breach of the agreement," she told AFP.

The Palestinians say Qandalaft's office is part of an association promoting Christian-Muslim relations which has operated since before Arafat's autonomy government was created in 1994.

Netanyahu is in a tough race for reelection in May and is presenting himself to

voters as the champion of Israeli sovereignty over all Jerusalem.

The Oslo interim peace accords between Israel and the PLO permit the only to operate in specified areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The fate of Arab east Jerusalem, which was occupied by the Jewish state along with the rest of the Palestinian territories in 1967, was to be determined in future negotiations on a permanent peace accord between the two sides.

Israel's annexation of Arab east Jerusalem is not recognised by the Palestinians or the international community.



TATTOOS FOR FOOD: David Greenwald lifts his sleeve for a better view of his 'Jimmy the Corn Man' tattoo at Casa Sanchez, a Mexican restaurant in San Francisco. The family-owned restaurant was inundated with responses after offering a lifetime of free lunches to anyone willing to get the restaurant's logo, a sombrero-wearing mariachi riding a blazing cornucopia, tattooed on their body (AP photo)

PLO to decide on statehood on April 27

GAZA (R) — Palestinian leaders will meet in Gaza on April 27 to decide whether to declare an independent state on May 4, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said on Tuesday.

Salim Al Zanoun said all 124 members of the PLO's Central Council (PCC), most of whom reside in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, would be invited to the meeting.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said he has the right to declare a state in the West Bank and Gaza on

May 4, when a five-year interim peace deal with Israel expires.

He has faced strong pressure from the United States, Europe, Jordan and Egypt to postpone such a declaration, given the impact the move would have on Israel's general election on May 17.

"A decision to delay, if taken, will certainly be painful but at the end the high national interest of the Palestinian people will govern a decision of any kind," Zanoun said.

Zanoun chairs the PCC, an

intermediate body between the PLO's Executive Committee and the Palestine National Council. He said the PCC would have the final say on the May 4 issue.

Arafat returned to Gaza on Tuesday from talks with Arab and Asian governments on the statehood issue and is expected to visit China next week.

"They are supporting us in any decision that will be taken by the Palestinian leadership," Arafat told reporters when asked about his recent contacts with foreign leaders.

One outcome of the PCC meeting, according to political analysts, could be a proposal to extend the interim agreement with Israel for a period of six to 12 months during which a final peace deal should be negotiated.

Those negotiations, known as final status talks, have hardly begun under the right-wing Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is campaigning for re-election on a platform of opposition to Palestinian statehood.

Turkish police cancel Kurd party rally, detain hundreds

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Police rounded up hundreds of Kurds on Tuesday after ordering Turkey's only legal pro-Kurdish political party to cancel an election rally in the largest city in the mostly Kurdish southeast.

The pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party is expected to sweep local elections in the southeast during Sunday's national elections, but is likely to fall short of the 10 per cent threshold of the national vote needed to win seats in parliament.

The rally in Diyarbakir would have been the party's first in the city, home to some 700,000 people.

Police chief Ali Gabbar Okan said the rally was cancelled for security reasons. He said police detained 300 people.

Selim Kurbanoglu, a senior official of the Diyarbakir branch of the People's Democracy Party, said party officials were notified only 25 minutes before the rally was scheduled to take place. He said police detained 2,000 people.

In Diyarbakir's Central Square, scores of people were forced to kneel on the ground as police armed with automatic rifles stood guard.

Armoured police cars and a truck filled with soldiers rushed to the area.

A plainclothes officer filmed the crowd from atop the medieval black basalt walls that surround the centre of the city.

"We will hold this meeting anyway. It is our basic right," said party supporter Ahmet Zeylan. Minutes later he ran into the back streets as policemen chased after him.

The party won more than 46 per cent of the votes in Diyarbakir in the 1995 national elections but took only 4.2 per cent of the vote countrywide.

The government has detained hundreds of the party's activists since Turkish commandos seized Abdullah Ocalan in Kenya in mid-February and brought him back to Turkey to stand trial.

More than 37,000 people have died as a result of fighting since Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party took up arms in 1984 in a bid to gain autonomy.

The People's Democracy Party, or HADEP, is calling for increased cultural rights for the Kurdish minority, such as the right to use the Kurdish language in schools and on television.

and on television.

"All my family and relatives will go to polls... to vote for HADEP," said Mehmet Bagir, 45. "HadeP is the voice of the Kurdish people."

In the run-up to the elections, more than 10 party offices have been closed on charges of possessing illegal books or magazines.

Three previous pro-Kurdish parties have been closed by the constitutional court and several pro-Kurdish deputies are in prison on charges of promoting separatism. A prosecutor is seeking to close HADEP, too.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Prince Hassan visits Kosovo refugee camp

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Hassan returned to Jordan on Tuesday after paying a humanitarian visit to the city of Kirkilareli in Turkey, where 3,500 Kosovo refugees are being sheltered. Prince Hassan, a member of the Informal Advisory Group of the UNHCR, stressed the need for providing the refugees with assistance until they can safely return home. Prince Hassan met with the refugees and inquired about their conditions, noting the role the Islamic World can play in offering assistance to Kosovans. Prince Hassan also stressed the need for establishing a Zakat fund to help extend suitable aid to refugees.

Tehran, London to restore ties 'shortly'

LONDON (AFP) — Iran and Britain will restore full diplomatic ties "shortly" by appointing ambassadors in each other's capitals, the British Foreign Office said on Tuesday. After a report in the British newspaper The Guardian on Tuesday that ambassadors would be swapped within days, the spokesman said: "We remain committed to the New York agreement and we hope to exchange ambassadors shortly." Sources added that the exchange was expected to take place in "weeks not days." It is expected that the two countries' charge d'affaires in each other's capitals — Britain's Nicholas Browne and Iran's Gholamreza Ansari — will be promoted to ambassadors.

Egyptian kills self over marriage costs

CAIRO (AP) — A house painter committed suicide by stabbing himself with a shard of glass because he could not meet the marriage costs set by his fiancée's family, police officials said Tuesday. Yasser Ali Mohammad, 25, died on the way to hospital in the northern port of Alexandria on Monday after a meeting between his family and his fiancée's family failed to decrease the costs, the officials said on condition of anonymity. He called the meeting of the families because he felt he could not save anymore. Police said that when the fiancée's family insisted on the stipulated costs, Mohammad ran to a window screaming "Let me die! Let me die!" He rammed his head through the window and picked up a shard of glass and plunged it into his throat.

'Mordechai's telephone tapped'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli technicians found a "professional" listening device Tuesday tapped into the home telephone line of Yitzhak Mordechai, a candidate for prime minister in May elections, Israeli public radio reported. Mordechai, a former defence minister fired by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in January, had informed police over the weekend that he believed his phone was tapped. Technicians of the public telephone company Bezeq found a listening device attached to the phone line serving Mordechai's home in a suburb of Jerusalem, the radio said. Bezeq officials told the radio the listening equipment and installation were "professional quality."

Hizbollah seizes SLA militiaman

MARJAYOUN (AP) — The Hizbollah guerrilla group announced Tuesday the capture of an Israeli-allied militiaman, but the militia said the man was a deserter. Hizbollah said its guerrillas seized Najm Habib, 19, Monday after "accurate reconnaissance" of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) fighter outside the town of Jezzine. Hizbollah announced the capture in a statement faxed to the Associated Press in Beirut, along with Habib's SLA identity card in Hebrew and Arabic.

Israel arrests 4 in slaying of land agent

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli police said on Tuesday they had arrested four Palestinians on suspicion of the 1997 kidnapping and killing of an Arab man who sold land in Jerusalem to Jews. Police said the four, who include the slain man's wife, told interrogators that senior Palestinian National Authority (PNA) officials had ordered the shooting death of Ali Mohammad Jumhour, 30, in the West Bank town of Ramallah in May 1997. "The main suspect in Jumhour's murder is the senior representative of the Palestinian Authority military intelligence in Shufat refugee camp," a police statement said.

Drunk elephant sent to detox

COPENHAGEN (AP) — Joergen Andersen could see something was wrong with Linda, the Copenhagen Zoo's 29-year-old elephant. "She went around swaying back and forth so we had to lock her up" last Sunday, the zookeeper told the Danish newspaper BT. "She was endangering herself and the other elephants." A veterinarian discovered the elephant's forage had a distinct smell of alcohol. It had fermented. Zoo spokesman Peter Hasse said he was not surprised that Linda, who was feeling better Monday, ate the fermented forage. "In nature, elephants love to eat fermented alcoholic fruit and they will actually prefer it over normal fruit," he said in a telephone interview.

KLM puts down 440 squirrels

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — Dutch airline company KLM was forced to put down 440 Chinese ground squirrels destined for Greece because the live consignment was not accompanied with the proper documents, the airline's cargo arm said Monday. The export and health documentation did not satisfy regulations for import into the European Union (EU). KLM made an unsuccessful attempt to return the squirrels to the shipper in China, and also failed to find a country outside the EU to take the squirrels — by now in too poor a physical condition for a long flight anyhow. KLM cargo and the division's staff were "extremely dismayed and upset by the course of events," a press release said Tuesday. The Dutch airline has launched an investigation into the affair, and has temporarily embargoed all KLM shipments of ground squirrels from China.

Japanese pilots can still light up

TOKYO (AFP) — Nicotine-starved pilots on long-haul non-smoking flights can still light up if they are desperate, carriers Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways said Tuesday. "The cockpit is a very special workplace," said Japan Airlines spokesman Takayuki Koike. "We have basically prohibited smoking in the cockpit but it can still be allowed with the understanding of co-workers in the case of a desperate need to smoke, such as high mental stress from work," he said. An internal memo by Japan Airlines reportedly tells pilots that "smoking can be permitted in the cockpit if prolonged abstinence from smoking could pose safety problems."

Ham returned 54 years later

TILLY-LA-CAMPAGNE (AP) — Talk about a guilt trip. Hans Kupperfahnenberg travelled from Germany to a tiny Normandy village just to return a ham like the one he stole from a French farmer during World War II. Making good on a 54-year-old promise, the 75-year-old German war veteran apologised on Monday night to Louise Marie, now 87, saying he was starving when he stole her ham in the summer of 1944. In a ceremony at the town hall of Tilly-La-Campagne, population 70, Kupperfahnenberg delivered two bars — one German, one French — to make amends for his wartime theft.

D.C. trappers get third beaver

WASHINGTON (AP) — Trappers have caught what they think is the last of the beavers that have been chewing away on Washington's famous Tidal Basin cherry trees. Trapper John Adcock Jr. said the third beaver was trapped Monday night shortly before midnight. Adcock said he thinks the male beaver — nicknamed "Big Daddy" — is the mate of the female trapped on Saturday and the father of the young beaver caught on Sunday. Adcock says all three appear in good health, although "Big Daddy" sustained a bloody nose when he was being moved from the trap to a transport cage on Tuesday.

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New violence prior to Algerian elections

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algerian voters have two days to mull over their choice among seven contenders for the presidency on Thursday after a campaign that closed with news of yet another massacre in the countryside.

The early-morning blood-bath near Mascara, in north-western Algeria, on Monday claimed 13 lives, the regional Quotidien d'Oran reported Tuesday.

Security forces had stated a death toll of 10 in the slaying at a false roadblock, some 400 kilometres west of Algiers and 100 kilometres from Oran.

The attack was the bloodiest since the March 25 start of electioneering by seven candidates to replace President Liamine Zeroual, who announced last year that he would be cutting short his mandate by nearly two years.

The new victims in the "Murderous End of Campaign," as the daily Le Matin headlined the news, were among nearly 1,400 people killed in attacks by armed groups or in operations by security forces since Zeroual's surprise Sept. 11 announcement.

Zeroual, elected to a five-year term in 1995, is thought to have decided to cut short his presidency because of disagreements with the military.

A truce reached in October 1997 with the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), the armed branch of the now-outlawed FIS, did little to slow the pace of attacks and massacres, with some of the continued violence blamed

on AIS militants.

Among other groups that remain active is the headline Armed Islamic Group (GIA), whose goal is to set up an Islamic state in Algeria.

Security is tight in the run-up to Thursday's vote. The interior ministry has banned trucks, except those delivering food, from circulating on Wednesday and Thursday, when sporting events and weekly markets are also prohibited.

The ongoing violence largely spared the 19-day electoral campaign that ended Monday, during which the rallying cry has been for national reconciliation after seven years of bloodshed.

Even in the absence of incidents marring the campaign, most candidates have pointed to the apparent pole position enjoyed by former Foreign Minister Abdul Aziz Bouteflika, with four candidates warning of fraud.

Former reformist Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche, when asked Monday why Bouteflika has not voiced concerns over possible vote-rigging, said: "He doesn't need to if he is the choice of the system that is the instrument of electoral fraud."

In a warning similar to those voiced by Ahmad Taleb Ibrahimi, an Islamist and former minister who wants to relegalise the FIS, opposition candidate Hocine Ait Ahmed and Islamist Abdullah Djaballah, Hamrouche said Monday: "If there is fraud in these elections, there will be serious consequences for the country."